

## **Ornament and Figure in Graeco-Roman Art**



# Ornament and Figure in Graeco-Roman Art



Rethinking Visual Ontologies in Classical Antiquity

Edited by  
Nikolaus Dietrich and Michael Squire

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# Contents

**Acknowledgements — VII**

**Notes on contributors — IX**

Michael Squire

**‘To haunt, to startle, and way-lay’: Approaching ornament and figure in Graeco-Roman art — 1**

Tonio Hölscher

**Figürlicher Schmuck in der griechischen Architektur zwischen Dekor und Repräsentation — 37**

Jonas Grethlein

**Ornamental and formulaic patterns: The semantic significance of form in early Greek vase-painting and Homeric epic — 73**

Annette Haug

**Ornament und Design: Attisch geometrische Figuralgefäße und Gefäße mit plastischem Dekor — 97**

François Lissarrague

**Armure et ornement dans l’imagerie attique — 129**

Nikolina Kéi

**Beneath the handles of Attic vases — 143**

Nikolaus Dietrich

**Order and contingency in Archaic Greek ornament and figure — 167**

Richard Neer

**Ornament, incipience and narrative: Geometric to Classical — 203**

Verity Platt

**Of sponges and stones: Matter and ornament in Roman painting — 241**

Nicola Barham

**Esteemed ornament: An overlooked value for approaching Roman visual culture — 279**

Arne Reinhardt

***Delectari varietate*: Zur Erklärung der repetitiven Darstellung auf dem  
'Puteal Tegel' — 299**

Jennifer Trimble

**Figure and ornament, death and transformation in the Tomb of the Haterii — 327**

Jaś Elsner

**Ornament, figure and *mise en abyme* on Roman sarcophagi — 353**

Susanne Muth

**Aus der Perspektive der römischen Bodenmosaiken: Ornamentalisierte Figuren oder  
figuralisierte Ornamente? — 393**

## Acknowledgements

This book is the result of an ongoing conversation between its two editors. The origins of the project lie in a period when both editors were based at the Winckelmann-Institut für Klassische Archäologie at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin: Michael Squire held a visiting fellowship, sponsored by the Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung (2008–2010); Nikolaus Dietrich was Wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter, working primarily with Susanne Muth (2008–2015). Despite (or perhaps rather because of) our different academic backgrounds, the theme of ‘ornament and figure’ quickly emerged as a topic of lively debate – one that spoke across the strictures and confines of our disciplines, as indeed across their different disciplinary parameters in Britain and Germany. At the same time, the theme led to stimulating conversations elsewhere in Europe, above all in France (at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris, especially with François Lissarrague and Nikolina Kéi). Most importantly, our conversations prompted questions about how the study of Greek and Roman visual culture has related (or indeed *could* relate) to some of the broader disciplinary questions of art history: our probing of classical ‘figurative’ and ‘ornamental’ traditions spurred us to re-build some bridges not only across the divides of polyglot classical scholarship, but also between the fields of classical archaeology, art history and philosophical aesthetics.

It was the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin (where Michael Squire was Fellow between 2012 and 2013) that provided an opportunity to extend our conversation so as to involve others. After a successful application in 2014, we were invited to host an international ‘Fellows Forum’ in the Kolleg’s luxurious Grünewald surroundings from 17–19 June 2015.<sup>1</sup> Most of the chapters in this volume derive from papers first aired during that conference. We owe a great debt to Luca Giuliani (Rektor), Thorsten Wilhelmy (Sekretär) and Reinhart Mayer-Kalkus and Daniel Schönplflug (Wissenschaftliche Koordinatoren) for supporting our application, as well as to Vera Kemper and Corina Pertschi for managing all practical and organisational aspects. We also thank those who acted as chairs, respondents and discussants in Berlin: we think especially of Mont Allen, Maria Luisa Catoni, Luca Giuliani, David Halperin, Aden Kumler, Stephanie Pearson, Andrej Petrovic, Margaret Shortle and Ittai Weinryb. Perhaps inevitably, not all the original papers could be incorporated in the book at hand. We therefore look forward to reading elsewhere the contributions by Francesco de Angelis (‘Politics as ornament: The diffusion of Roman public imagery in the domestic sphere’), Vera Beyer (‘Infrastructures: On the relationship between ornament and figure in Early Netherlandish painting’) and Milette Gaifman (‘“Florals”: Leaves and flourishes on Classical Greek vases’).

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<sup>1</sup> For details of the workshop, cf. [www.wiko-berlin.de/veranstaltungen/workshops/workshops-20142015/ornament-and-figure/home/](http://www.wiko-berlin.de/veranstaltungen/workshops/workshops-20142015/ornament-and-figure/home/).

We have accrued a number of subsequent debts while transforming the project into the present edited volume. First, we are grateful to Mary Morton and Patricia Petersen for their assistance with copy-editing. Second, it is a pleasure to thank Mirko Vonderstein at De Gruyter for his friendly support throughout. Third, we are grateful to those who have assisted in the publication costs of the book, above all the Leverhulme Trust, the Department of Classics at King's College London and the Institut für Klassische Archäologie at the Universität Heidelberg.

It seems right to add something about the form of the contributions that follow. Our foremost aim for this book has been to develop a conversation across national boundaries: inevitably, that has entailed working across the parameters of disciplinary paradigms, bibliographic backdrops and above all *language*. As a result, it seemed important to allow contributors to write in whichever language they felt most comfortable – resulting, in our case, in a book that oscillates between English, French and German. We make no apology for this, and consider the polyglot nature of the book a strength rather than a weakness. In light of recent political developments – especially, but not only, in Britain – the need to engage beyond national boundaries seems more important than ever: we dedicate the book to that spirit of open intellectual exchange.

Michael Squire  
Nikolaus Dietrich

Berlin, April 2017

## Notes on contributors

**Nicola Barham** is Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in the Center for Arts and Humanities at the American University of Beirut. She was previously Research Associate in the Department of Ancient and Byzantine Art at the Art Institute of Chicago, and in 2013–2014 she was CASVA Chester Dale Fellow at the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC.

**Nikolaus Dietrich** is Junior Professor of Classical Archaeology at Heidelberg University; he was previously based at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (2008–2015). His research concentrates on Archaic and Classical Greek art, above all in the fields of vase-painting and sculpture; he is the author of *Figur ohne Raum? Bäume und Felsen in der attischen Vasenmalerei des 6. und 5. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.* (2010) and *Das Attribut als Problem: Eine bildwissenschaftliche Untersuchung zur griechischen Kunst* (2018) – both also published by De Gruyter.

**Jaś Elsner** is Professor of Late Antique Art at the University of Oxford and Humfrey Payne Senior Fellow at Corpus Christi College. He is also Visiting Professor of Art and Religion at the University of Chicago and Senior Research Keeper at the British Museum. Sarcophagi – as well as the relationship between the ‘figurative’ and the ‘ornamental’ – have long been a major component of his research into the ontological dimensions of Roman art.

**Jonas Grethlein** is Professor of Greek Literature at Heidelberg University and director of the European Research Council project *Experience and Teleology in Ancient Narrative*. His books include *The Greeks and their Past* (2010); *Experience and Teleology in Ancient Historiography* (2013); and *Aesthetic Experiences and Classical Antiquity* (2017).

**Annette Haug** is Professor of Classical Archaeology at the Christian-Albrechts-University, Kiel. Her research has explored all aspects of Greek and Roman visual culture, as well as the styling of urban and living atmospheres. Publications include *Die Entdeckung des Körpers: Körper- und Rollenbilder im Athen des 8. und 7. Jh. v. Chr.* (2012); *Bild und Ornament im frühen Athen* (2015); and *Stadterfahrung als Sinneserfahrung in der Römischen Kaiserzeit* (2016, edited with Patric Kreuz).

**Tonio Hölscher** is Professor Emeritus of Classical Archaeology at the University of Heidelberg. He has held visiting fellowships and professorships throughout the world – including at Berkeley, Columbia and Princeton. He has written and edited numerous books, among them *Griechische Historienbilder des 5. und 4. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.* (1973); *Römische Bildsprache als semantisches System* (1987; English translation 2004, *The Language of Roman Art*); *Klassische Archäologie: Grundwissen* (2002); and *La vie*

*des images grecques: sociétés de statues, rôles des artistes et notions esthétiques dans l'art grec ancien* (2015).

**Nikolina Kéi** is 'Ingénieur de recherche en analyse des images' at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris; she also serves as lecturer ('Enseignante-va-cataire') at the Sorbonne, where she teaches archaeology and the history of art. The focus of her research is Attic vase-painting: alongside the relationship between 'figure' and 'ornament', particular interests include the use of flowers and floral motifs in Greek painted pottery, the adornment of the body and the social and mediating roles of objects in antiquity.

**François Lissarrague** was (until his retirement in 2016) Director of Studies at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris. He was trained as a classicist at the Sorbonne; after writing his dissertation under the supervision of Pierre Vidal-Naquet, he joined the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris in 1980. He is the author of numerous books on ancient Greek imagery – among them *The Aesthetics of Greek Banquet* (1990 – originally published in 1987 as *Un flot d'images: une esthétique du banquet grec*), *Greek Vases: The Athenians and their Images* (2001 – originally published in 1999 as *Vases Grecs: les Athéniens et leurs images*) and most recently *La cité des satyres* (2013).

**Susanne Muth** is Professor of Classical Archaeology at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Her research has explored ancient imagery, the Roman urban landscape, Imperial and late-antique housing, ancient mosaics and the post-antique reception of classical materials. Among her books are *Erleben von Raum – Leben im Raum: Zur Funktion mythologischer Mosaikbilder in der römisch-kaiserzeitlichen Wohnarchitektur* (1998) and *Gewalt im Bild: Das Phänomen der medialen Gewalt im Athen des 6. und 5. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.* (2008); she directs the Digital Roman Forum project ([www.digitales-forum-romanum.de](http://www.digitales-forum-romanum.de)) and has edited, most recently, a volume on *Laokoon: Auf der Suche nach einem Meisterwerk* (2017).

**Richard Neer** teaches at the University of Chicago, where he is William B. Ogden Distinguished Service Professor of Art History, Cinema & Media Studies, and the College; he has received fellowships and awards from the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, the J. Paul Getty Trust and the American Academy in Rome. His research straddles the fields of aesthetics, archaeology and art history, and since 2010 he has served as Executive Editor of *Critical Inquiry*. Recent books include *The Emergence of the Classical Style in Greek Sculpture* (2010) and *Art and Archaeology of the Greek World: A New History, 2500–100 BCE* (2012). Current projects include a monograph (with Leslie Kurke) on Pindar and the role of poetry in ancient conceptions of landscape, architecture and the built environment.

**Verity Platt** is Professor in Classics and History of Art at Cornell University. She is the author of *Facing the Gods: Epiphany and Representation in Graeco-Roman Art, History and Religion* (2011) and co-editor, with Michael Squire, of *The Art of Art History in Graeco-Roman Antiquity* (2010) and *The Frame in Classical Art: A Cultural History* (2017). She is currently working on a monograph on *Beyond Ekphrasis: Making Objects Matter in Classical Antiquity*.

**Arne Reinhardt** teaches classical archaeology at Heidelberg University. He studied Graeco-Roman archaeology alongside classical philology at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich, and received his doctorate from the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin in 2015: the thesis will be published within the *Monumenta Artis Romanae* series, as *Reproduktion und Bild: Zur Wiederholung und Vervielfältigung von Reliefbildern und -objekten in römischer Zeit*.

**Michael Squire** is Reader in Classical Art at King's College London; he has held fellowships at Cambridge, Cologne, Harvard, Munich, Stanford and at the Max-Planck Institut für Wissenschaftsgeschichte and Wissenschaftskolleg in Berlin. His books include *Panorama of the Classical World* (2004, with Nigel Spivey); *Image and Text in Graeco-Roman Antiquity* (2009); *The Art of the Body: Antiquity and its Legacy* (2011); and *The Iliad in a Nutshell: Visualizing Epic on the Tabulae Iliacae* (2011). Recent edited volumes have explored ancient sight (2016); the frames of classical art (2017, with Verity Platt); Lessing's *Laocoon* (2017, with Avi Lifschitz); the picture-poetry of Optatian (2017, with Johannes Wienand); and Hegelian aesthetics (2018, with Paul Kottman).

**Jennifer Trimble** is Associate Professor of Classics at Stanford University, with interests in Roman portraits and replication, the visual culture of Roman slavery, comparative urbanism and ancient mapping. Her book on *Women and Visual Replication in Roman Imperial Art and Culture* was published by Cambridge University Press in 2011. She is currently working on a monograph on *Seeing Roman Slaves*.





Michael Squire

## **‘To haunt, to startle, and way-lay’: Approaching ornament and figure in Graeco-Roman art\***

*She was a Phantom of delight  
When first she gleamed upon my sight;  
A lovely Apparition, sent  
To be a moment's ornament;  
Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair;  
Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair;  
But all things else about her drawn  
From May-time and the cheerful Dawn;  
A dancing Shape, an Image gay,  
To haunt, to startle, and way-lay.<sup>1</sup>*

This is a book about how we approach classical traditions of image-making. Our aim is to probe the historical ways in which Graeco-Roman artists conceptualised, constructed and interrogated the field of vision – that is, to explore how ‘imagery’ itself came to be envisaged in the eyes of ancient makers and viewers. At the same time, we seek to situate that history against a larger conceptual backdrop: to (re-)build some disciplinary bridges between the classical archaeological study of Graeco-Roman objects, defined by a particular set of geographical and chronological parameters, and the broader disciplinary questions of art history, oriented around more transhistorical, diachronic and cross-cultural comparative concerns.<sup>2</sup>

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\* The present chapter – and my work on the book as a whole – was facilitated through the generous support of the Leverhulme Trust. It is a pleasure to thank Nikolaus Dietrich, Jaś Elsner, Verity Platt and Christopher Whitton for discussion and critical feedback, as well as colleagues and friends in the Department of Classics at King's College London.

1 Wordsworth 1815, 1.310 (*Poems of the Imagination* no. VII, 1807).

2 As such, our project in this book is very much an extension of others – above all, that of Platt and Squire (eds.) 2017, dedicated to the ‘frames’ of Graeco-Roman art, while also re-thinking categories of ‘parergonal ornament’ (see e.g. Platt and Squire 2017: esp. 7–12, 38–59). There are numerous introductions to the current state of classical art history, which sits somewhat uncomfortably – at least in Anglophone contexts – between the disciplinary paradigms of ‘classics’ and ‘art history’: cf. e.g. Donohue 2003 (‘The study of ancient art exists uneasily in a disciplinary no-man's land’, 4); Donohue 2005, 1–14; Kampen 2002; Elsner 2007; Lorenz 2016, esp. 3–9. For my own thoughts – with some comments about the differences between Germanophone and Anglo-Saxon traditions – see Squire 2011a, 372–381, along with e.g. Squire 2012.

While the intellectual ambitions of the volume are wide-ranging, its specific remit is narrower in scope: to shed light on classical traditions of image-making by examining the rapport between ‘ornament’ and ‘figure’ in Graeco-Roman art. As numerous contributors stress, these are modern terms: our language is loaded with anachronistic assumptions about form and value, and the semantic distinction lacks any straightforward counterpart in ancient Greek or Latin.<sup>3</sup> Yet it is precisely the relationship between ‘ancient’ materials and posthumous ‘modern’ western (as indeed other) frameworks that interests us. A series of questions ensues. If classical traditions of image-making are recurrently celebrated for their mimetic naturalism, what role should we ascribe to visual components that exceed, defy or destabilise that figurative dimension? Can we talk about ‘ornament’ as a meaningful (which is to say, perhaps, meaningless) category in Greek and Roman art? Likewise, what is the relationship between ancient visual forms that lend themselves to iconic interpretation on the one hand, and those that resist such modes of response on the other?

The book does not offer uniform answers to these questions. Definitions of ‘ornament’ and ‘figure’ vary – sometimes widely – across chapters. Likewise, contributors tackle the all-important ‘and’ that connects our key terms in different ways, whether defining the relationship as either antithetical or complementary, or else challenging the pairing of these terms in the first place. As editors, our aim has not been to lay down a partisan line and ask colleagues to follow suit. Rather, the book is motivated by a desire to initiate new conversations, and across traditional disciplinary lines.

Above all, participants have been invited to combine close formal analysis of their material case studies with broader cultural historical critique. By exploring the different ways in which ancient images construct the field of visual imagery, chapters seek to probe not only the forms of ancient images, but also the cultural work that they performed. ‘Neoformalist’ would be one way of describing that collective approach, combining close observation of individual works with broader cultural historical analysis.<sup>4</sup> Another way of characterising it – as reflected in the volume’s polyglossia – would be as an attempt to bring together different academic traditions, working across the national parameters of so much Anglophone, Germanophone and Francophone scholarship in particular.

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<sup>3</sup> On ancient terminologies, see Platt and Squire 2017, 45–47 – along with the chapters in this volume by e.g. Hölscher, Dietrich, Platt, Barham and Reinhardt (with further references). On Greek delineations of *kosmos*, see Marconi 2004, Hölscher 2009 and Haug 2015a, 22–24 (esp. 22–23, n. 63). The fullest discussion of the semantics – in connection with pre-Socratic philosophers – is Kerschensteiner 1962, esp. 4; cf. Kranz 1955; Diller 1956; Kahn 1960, 219–230; Lämmli 1962, esp. 1.20–26; Haebler 1967; Cartledge 1998, esp. 3–4; I have not been able to consult Dognini 2002. On associated Roman ideas of *decor* and *ornamentum*, see above all Pollitt 1974, 341–347, along with Marvin 1993; Perry 2002 and 2005, esp. 28–50; Swift 2009, esp. 16–17; and Squire 2015, 591–594 (with further bibliographic review).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Platt and Squire 2017, 5–6.

Our book surveys an array of different media, ranging from architecture and plastic sculpture to the pictorial representations of painting and mosaics, while also paying attention to visual forms that exist between these three- and two-dimensional modes. By extension, chapters pay close attention to fluctuations of space and time, traversing the ancient Mediterranean, and moving from the Early Iron Age through to late antiquity. We do not apologise for juggling so many variables, nor do we make any claim to comprehensiveness. For what ultimately unites our project is a concern with what we label the ‘ontologies’ of ancient images. As we hope to demonstrate, categories of ‘ornament’ and ‘figure’ do not constitute a timeless dialectic for approaching (Graeco-Roman) images; rather, shifting attitudes and relationships open up exciting questions about what images were in antiquity, no less than what they are in cross-cultural perspective. If relationships between ornament and figure help us appreciate how the visual field came to be materialised and conceptualised in antiquity, they can also stimulate new ways of connecting ancient traditions with those of other cultural times and places.

# I

Introductions to edited volumes have a habit of quickly becoming diffuse. Before sketching the scholarly backdrop to our project (16–22), and before outlining the structure of the chapters that follow (22–28), let me therefore turn to a concrete material case study to tease out some of our concerns. A painted pot from the British Museum – emblazoned on the front cover of our book – seems an appropriate place to begin: the so-called ‘Euphorbus Plate’, usually dated to the last quarter of the seventh century BC (Fig. 1.1).<sup>5</sup>

This object will be familiar to most readers of this volume: it is frequently reproduced in introductory textbooks, and it regularly features within introductory student surveys on Greek art. The plate was found in the Rhodian settlement of Kameiros, and acquired by the British Museum in 1860. In stylistic terms, our object is usually associated with the so-called ‘Wild Goat Style’ of the eastern Greek islands, and there has been much debate about its relationship with other Ionian regional schools.<sup>6</sup> At

<sup>5</sup> London, British Museum: inv. A749. For a recent overview of scholarship, see Giuliani 2013, 99–102 (translating Giuliani 2003, 125–129), with further bibliography at 285, n. 35. The best formalist analysis of the object is Simon 1976, 54–55, no. 31. On the history of the supposed workshop, see Schiering 1957, esp. 11–12.

<sup>6</sup> For a brief introduction, cf. Boardman 1998, 141–144 (mentioning the Euphorbus Plate at 143), and 2001, 35–38. More detailed overviews can be found in Walter 1968, esp. 129 (no. 623), Walter-Karydi 1998, esp. 292–293 (with references to the author’s earlier work) and Attula 2006, 86–87.



**Fig. 1.1:** Euphorbus Plate, found in Kameiros on Rhodes, probably made in the last quarter of the seventh century BC. London, British Museum: inv. A749 (1860/0404.1).

any rate, its three ‘figures’ are easy enough to make out. Dressed in hoplite armour, two warriors are portrayed in the first moment of engagement; each advances with the left leg forward, and each wields a spear in his upturned right hand; the spears are shown just shy of meeting, but direct viewers to the centre of the composition. A third warrior – who has fallen in battle, and who is shown reclining to the lower left – provides a narrative context for the duel: his position visually aligns him with the warrior standing above, and he is wearing similar armour (the same shield and helmet), carefully distinguished from that worn by the warrior to the right. By the seventh century, such scenes of one-on-one combat, conducted over the body of a fallen comrade, were becoming fairly generic. On our plate, however, identifying inscriptions have been added to the figures: the labels specify that we are looking at

a duel between ‘Menelaus’ (Μενέλαος) and ‘Hector’ (Ἑκτόρ), who are shown fighting over the body of ‘Euphorbus’ (Εὐφορβος).<sup>7</sup>

Scholarly discussion of this object has tended to focus – almost exclusively – on the relationship between our scene and the Homeric rendition of a related myth (*Iliad* 17.1–113).<sup>8</sup> The Iliadic version of the story describes how Menelaus, after noticing the demise of Patroclus, and in an effort to protect his body, fought and killed a Trojan warrior named Euphorbus;<sup>9</sup> before Menelaus managed to strip Euphorbus’ body of its armour, Apollo intervened and spurred Hector into combat. At this point, rather than face Hector, Menelaus retreats, leaving the corpse ‘with many a turn, like a bearded lion being driven from the fold by dogs and men – by their spears and their shouts’ (*Il.* 17.108–111).

Much has been made of the (im)precise alignment between the visual minutiae of our scene and the verbal details of the Homeric narrative.<sup>10</sup> Where Homer has the Greek Menelaus kill the Trojan Euphorbus and then withdraw as Hector approaches, the fallen Euphorbus here appears to be more closely associated with Menelaus than with his Trojan compatriot. Indeed, according to Homer’s version, Menelaus and Hector never do actually fight over Euphorbus’ body: although the scene on our plate is in one sense perfectly imaginable against the narrative setting of Homer’s poem, the depicted duel has no strict counterpart in the *Iliad*. Such discrepancies have led a number of scholars to associate the imagery with an alternative version of the myth.

7 On the inscribed letter-forms, see below, 10–12: while the names Μενέλαος and Εὐφορβος are to be read from left to right, Ἑκτόρ reads from right to left. As Fittschen 1969, 174 notes, it is ‘allein durch die Beischriften’ that the imagery becomes a heroic, mythical scene. In the whole constellation of surviving ancient art, there is no other undisputed extant image of Euphorbus: cf. *LIMC* 4.1: 69, s. v. ‘Euphorbos I’.

8 Discussions are numerous – and conclusions diverse: cf. Schefold 1964, 8–9, 84, and 1993, 17–18, 143; Friis Johansen 1967, 77–80 (‘There can hardly be any other satisfactory explanation of all these remarkable features than that the painter of the Euphorbus plate was inspired for his figure-group by a model from the North-East Peloponnese, in whose art battle-groups like the one he chose to portray had been exceedingly popular since the Early Proto-Corinthian days’, 79); Fittschen 1969, 174, no. SB 78; Cook 1983, 2–3; Ahlberg-Cornell 1992, 65–66; Snodgrass 1998, 105–109 (concluding that ‘the Euphorbus Plate is very far from being the star witness of Homeric inspiration that it first seemed’, 109); Burgess 2001, 77–81 (‘I conclude the the Rhodian plate and the Argive tradition are actually “Iliadic-derived” phenomena. That is, the Iliadic tradition is their ultimate, if perhaps vague, inspiration’, 81); Wachter 2001, 221, no. DOH 1, 310–311; Giuliani 2013, 98–102 (‘There is no avoiding the fact that what is actually depicted has very little to do with the substance of the episode related in the text’, 100).

9 It has been argued that the character of Euphorbus was a specifically ‘Homeric’ invention, designed to suit the narrative frame of the *Iliad*: see Mühlestein 1987, 79–89, with further bibliography in Burgess 2001, 220–221, n. 111.

10 For a critique of the methodological issues, cf. Squire 2009, 122–139, and Squire 2011a, esp. 139–145 (both with detailed bibliographic survey); cf. Squire and Elsner 2016, along with Grethlein’s chapter in this volume.

Noting the supposed form of the Argive lettering,<sup>11</sup> and looking to corroboratory evidence from ancient texts,<sup>12</sup> some have gone still further: are we perhaps dealing not with the 'Homeric' account, they have asked, but with a local (perhaps 'Argive') variant?

Within the context of a book on *Ornament and Figure in Graeco-Roman Art*, what makes the Euphorbus Plate so rich is less the issue of 'Homer and the artists' than the means by which the painter goes about constructing his visual field. Fundamental is the gesture of taking a functional, circular object – a round, three-dimensional plate, 39.4 cm across – and delineating within it a self-contained, two-dimensional space for figurative representation.<sup>13</sup> The painter's subsequent distinction between field and ground is achieved by a variety of means: a series of borders demarcate a circular pictorial frame, ranging from a thick black rim around the edges of the interior tondo to internal painted circles of varying thickness (two of them occupied by a further zigzag). Around this are laid out additional circles, extending outwards so as to encase the three-dimensional object: most prominently, a ring of painted dots spins about the plate, contained within two circular lines. Beyond the circles, around the lip, are still more painted patterns, at once framing the central image and defining the tactile outer area of the plate. The outer perimeter is segregated into a series of self-contained sections, each delineated by four lines (there are over twenty in number, of uneven dimensions); within each of these spaces, we find additional 'Punktrosetten' – patterns of either five or six painted dots, rendered in a circular, floral arrangement, almost like thumb-impressions that suggest the touch of the user.

So much for the surrounding frame. But what of the pictorial space within? At the centre of the plate, the painter has fashioned a distinct representational field for the three named protagonists to occupy. The use of polychrome makes the figures stand out against the creamy surface: the bodies are outlined in black silhouette, while the cuirass and greaves (and, in Hector's case, also the helmet) are left as white ground; likewise, varying shades of ochre brown are used for the exposed flesh, lower tunic and helmet.<sup>14</sup> With any circular object, a specific challenge lies in the need for a

<sup>11</sup> See below, n. 28: particularly important was Böhlau 1898, 73, arguing – unconvincingly, in my view – that the plate was an attempt to replicate an Argive-Corinthian bronze plaque.

<sup>12</sup> Above all, Paus. 2.17.3, mentioning the display (in the Argive Heraion) of a shield which Menelaus supposedly captured from Euphorbus: cf. e.g. Böhlau 1898, 73; Schiering 1957, 104–105; Friis Johansen 1967, 80; Cook 1983, 2; Ahlberg-Cornell 1992, 65; Schefold 1993, 17–18; Snodgrass 1998, 107; Burgess 2001, 77–78; Wachter 2001, 310–311. Sceptical – but in my view more convincing – is Giuliani 2013, 285, n. 40 ('It seems that there was neither an old, Argive story of a duel between Menelaos and Hector nor a corresponding Argive iconography').

<sup>13</sup> On the delineation of visual field from ground, see in particular Schapiro 1969; cf. e.g. Taylor 1964, 1–67 and Arnheim 1974, 239–241.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Simon 1976, 54: 'die Haut der drei Krieger ist rotbraun, goldbraun sind die beiden Helme links, die Helmbüsche und die kurzen Chitone'. In contrast to the helmets of Menelaus and Euphorbus, the

groundline – a plane on which the bodies and figurative actions are situated:<sup>15</sup> in our case, this is achieved via a gently curving contour in the lower section of the tondo, at once nodding to the rounded design of the plate and providing a topographical surface for the depicted figures to stand or recline on. It would have been possible to leave the space below that line empty. But the painter evidently judged it undesirable to do so: instead, he filled the area with an interwoven guilloche pattern; beneath – forming, in effect, a lower exergue – are more decorative shapes, stretching outwards to the edge of the frame. Even in this lower band ordered symmetry proves crucial: witness, for example, the painter's (slightly misjudged?) mathematical calculations, whereby three apsidal shapes painted in black are interspersed with a corresponding silhouette that is left 'empty' of internal adornment.<sup>16</sup>

If the circular interior provides a privileged inner space for the figures, the boundaries between framed representation and framing surrounds prove to be inherently permeable. For one thing, we might observe how the figures break free from the circular frame that contains them: to the left, Menelaus' right foot, helmet and right hand protrude beyond the internal border (Fig. 1.2), just as, to the right, Hector's spear punctures the surrounding cyclical boundary; in each case, the frame doubles up as a figurative backdrop – something layered behind the foreground.<sup>17</sup> No less impor-

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crest of Hector's helmet is coloured, while the lower body is left white. All three figures wear greaves, which are left white against the painted exposed flesh (although the greave on Menelaus' left leg is adorned with criss-crossing shapes). In certain places, the perimeters of the greaves are delineated not with a continuous contour, but with dotted lines (as most clearly visible in the case of Euphorbus) – which recall the circular row of dots around the plate's perimeter.

**15** On the history of fabricating groundlines on the surface of Greek painted pottery – stretching all the way back to the earliest figurative schemes of Geometric art – see Hurwit 1977, esp. 18–22 and Hurwit 1992 (developed from Hurwit 1975); the richest discussion is Dietrich 2010, 106–302, discussing the early history on 107–113. Haug 2015a charts a related development in connection with the history of Attic Geometric vase-painting, reaching to the end of the seventh century; cf. Platt and Squire 2017, esp. 13–20, 32–33, and (emphasising the continuity with Mycenaean vase-painting) Rystedt and Wells (eds.) 2006.

**16** So important is this symmetry that it comes, at the lower left-hand side of the exergue, at the cost of cramming three such painted patterns into a space that can barely accommodate them: while the trio of forms fits comfortably into the area to the right, the unpainted apsidal shape at the centre is not situated at a strictly perpendicular angle to the horizontal line (it leans slightly to the left); insufficient space has been provided for the patterns to the left, resulting in the crowded composition at the edge.

**17** Close examination – particularly evident when inspecting the crest of Menelaus' helmet – confirms the order in which the different elements were painted, and in turn underscores the painter's deliberate breaking of the frame. The painter began by drawing the circular frame; he then demarcated the figures, showing them as overlapping with that boundary (hence the residual visibility of the underlying lines). The situation might be contrasted with another contemporary plate from Kameiros, also illustrated in this chapter (Fig. 1.5): in this latter case, after all, the outer circular frames were evidently painted *after* completing the central winged figure; this explains how – unlike with the tail of the bird carried in her right hand – the plate's outer frames have been designed to accommodate



Fig. 1.2: Detail of the same plate.

tantly, the visual patterns of the frame seep into the figurative area of the picture: the very space that our figures occupy is awash with ‘floral’ patterns, dotted rosettes, circular designs and rectilinear geometric forms.<sup>18</sup> Some of these shapes visually echo the ones around the outer perimeters of the plate. In the case of the internal picture, however, many of the forms are obscured by the surrounding circular perimeter: they are shown not in their entirety, but as semicircles eclipsed by the frame. As if to drive home the play between centre and periphery, the middle of the plate – just beneath its pivotal fulcrum, and the point around which the object was originally spun on the potter’s wheel – is occupied by a polychrome circle. On one level, this form, complete with coloured centre and globular border, mirrors the shape of the shields on either side of it. On another, this shape mirrors the composition of the plate as a whole: when viewed in the context of the two-dimensional representational field, as indeed

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the figure’s two protruding feet. For the relationship between figure and frames in Greek painted pottery, see Hurwit 1977 and 1992, along with Dietrich 2010, 106–302, esp. 114–137 (with detailed further bibliography), and Marconi 2017; cf. also Kéi’s chapter in this volume.

**18** With a view to both the seeping of ornament into the representational field and the breaking of the frame, one might compare the (roughly contemporary) Protoattic amphora from Eleusis (Figs. 3.2–3.3, 8.6): in addition to the chapters by Grethlein and Neer in this volume, cf. Hurwit 1977, 24–25; Osborne 1988, 1–6; Haug 2012, 36–40; Haug 2015a, 173–178; Platt and Squire 2017, 17–20, 32–33. The mid-seventh-century ‘Aristonothos krater’ from Cerveteri – discussed in the context of Neer’s chapter in this volume (Figs. 8.4–8.5) proves equally relevant here.



against the real-life three-dimensional plate on which that painterly space is structured, the circle is loaded with different sorts of figurative potential.

Look more carefully at the bodies of the three warriors and we find a similar confluence of decorative and figurative motifs. Particularly striking is the armour in which the figures are decked out, not least their cuirasses.<sup>19</sup> Whether seen from the front (in the case of Menelaus and Euphorbus), or from the back (in the case of Hector), the creamy colour of each cuirass echoes the surface of the ceramic object. At the same time, both plate and cuirass serve as sites for painted embellishment: notice the hems of the tunics, for example, the zigzag patterns at the bottom of the breastplates, and not least the symmetrical patterns emblazoned at the top. In the case of the breastplate volute-spirals, we are dealing with shapes loaded with at least three sorts of internal visual resonance. First, within the visual field of the tondo, the forms echo the spirals at the upper register of the circular frame. From a different perspective, second, the volute patterns mirror the contours of contemporary armour, which themselves modelled pectoral muscles through precisely these sorts of coiling patterns. Third, they allude to actual bodily forms – that is, to physical, anatomical features which cuirasses at once cover up and suggestively expose.<sup>20</sup>

Still more interesting are the shields themselves (Fig. 1.3).<sup>21</sup> To the left, we see the inside of the shields held by Menelaus and Euphorbus. Indeed, the two circular devices serve as figurative counterparts to the ceramic plate on which they appear: both are complete with dotted perimeter-boundary (this time white dots rendered against a black rim), and both feature an internal double-volute pattern (again closely related to the patterns in the frame). Conversely, to the right, Hector's shield is seen from the outside, this time featuring the emblematic figure of an eagle.<sup>22</sup> In technical terms, the bird is unique within the plate's imagery: it has been rendered according to

<sup>19</sup> The point could be extended: one might observe, for example, how the semicircular shapes of the helmets visually echo the eclipsed circular shapes around the edge of the frame.

<sup>20</sup> The best overview of Greek armour in English remains Snodgrass 1967; I have learned in particular here from discussions with François Lissarrague (whose book on visual representations of Archaic and Classical Greek armour is eagerly awaited). More generally on the representation of armour on Greek painted pottery, and the interplay between pattern and anatomical forms, see above all Lissarrague 2008 – along with Lissarrague's chapter in this volume. Highly stimulating on armour as a 'second' skin – in the context of sixteenth-century Renaissance painting and sculpture – is Stoichita 2012; cf. also (in relation to the much later cuirass of the Prima Porta Augustus) Squire 2013a.

<sup>21</sup> On the 'double-grip' shield portrayed here, cf. Viggiano and van Wees 2013, 57–59: in the case of Menelaus' shield, shown from the inside, we clearly see the armband (*porpax*) for inserting the left forearm up to the elbow, and the grip (*antilabē*) occupying the inner rim for grasping with the left hand.

<sup>22</sup> On the significance of shield-emblems in Greek vase-painting – a hugely stimulating but understudied subject – see Chase 1902, along with Vaerst 1980. Ahlberg-Cornell 1992, 65, draws a parallel between this eagle and a related device on Hector's shield painted on an aryballos in Paris (Louvre, inv. 669).



Fig. 1.3: Detail of the same plate.

the practice developed by Corinthian black-figure vase-painters – that is, of painting a ‘figure’ in black silhouette and then marking out details through subsequent incisions; as motif, the bird is almost introduced like a quotation, an allusion to the cavalcades of animals found on Corinthian ware, themselves contained in circling bands of decoration. For all the figurative force of this eagle, however, we are here looking not at a *real* bird, but at an *image* of a bird, forming part of Hector’s own military adornment (his *kosmêsis*, as it would have been called in Greek):<sup>23</sup> the ‘eagle’ is a figurative representation *within* the shield’s internal representational frame, albeit one that is surrounded by ‘Punktrosetten’ that mirror those outside its internal figurative space.

The presence of writing on the plate – still rare at the time of its production – further complicates the painterly delineation of space. With these three naming inscriptions, the sequence of letters moves in different directions, proceeding along both horizontal and vertical axes in order to occupy the available space. In each case, the inscriptions are painted within the figurative realm of the representation. Likewise, there is an intriguing correlation between the arrangement of letters and the bodily schemata of the protagonists whom they identify. With ‘Menelaus’, the alphabetic characters mirror the bodily outline of the figure, with one arm raised to hold the spear (at the left), the other lowered so as to clasp the shield (to the right). By contrast, in the case of ‘Hector’, the angle of the five letters roughly aligns with the diagonal of the warrior’s raised right forearm. Of the three inscriptions, the name ‘Euphorbus’ follows the straightest course, so that the lettered movement from left to right underwrites the supine position of the associated figure – while also accentuating the shape of the shield around which the scene’s action unfolds. If in each case the arrangement of letters aligns with the static outlines of the figural forms, the direction of writing – from left to right with the name of Μενέλαος, and from right to left with the name of

<sup>23</sup> For the significance of the term, see Lissarrague’s chapter in this volume.

Ἔκτορ – maps onto the scene of figurative combat: in each case, the progression of letters accentuates the suggestion of dynamic movement.<sup>24</sup>

What, then, are we to make of these alphabetic characters? While the letters form part of the pictorial field, they are nonetheless extrinsic to the representational scene: they may be visible to external viewers of the plate, but they are unseen by the protagonists depicted within. While the inscribed names appeal to alphabetic decipherment – inviting audiences to view them as letters rather than as mere graphic strokes<sup>25</sup> – they here exist within the realm of other painterly adornments.<sup>26</sup> As patterns, the very form of these characters draws out the contours of adjacent shapes: the rounded silhouette-figures of the omicron and phi letters, for example, mirror the outline of adjacent cyclical patterns (as indeed the circular shapes of the shields, not to mention the rotund form of the plate itself); likewise, the symmetrical pattern to the left of Menelaus is structured around what looks to be a 'chi', with its associated 'v'-shapes recalling the upsilon in 'Euphorbus'.<sup>27</sup> In all this, the presence of writing accentuates questions about where decorative forms stop and figuration begins (and vice versa). Much has been written about the specific forms of these letters, above all in an effort to pinpoint the geographical derivation of our plate: some have associated

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**24** On the figurative uses of written letters on early Greek painted pottery, see in particular Osborne and Pappas 2007. Cf. more generally Lissarrague 1985; 1990, esp. 125–135; 1992, esp. 191–197; 1999; Hurwit 1990; Henderson 1994; Snodgrass 2000; Steiner 2007, 74–93; Gerleigner 2015. On parallels with the inscriptions of Archaic sculpture, see the pioneering discussion of Dietrich 2017, 302–315. Jeffery 1990, 154, notes that 'all the elaborate filling-motives characteristic of the style were painted in, and the picture finished, before the inscriptions were inserted; for they are squeezed in just as the motives leave room for them.'

**25** It is worth remembering here that, within Greek semantics, the boundaries between 'writing' and 'painting' were inherently fluid: there was no unambiguous distinction between the two (*grammata* could refer to the 'strokes' of alphabetic letters and graphic depiction). The clearest demonstration of the point comes in the proliferation of so-called 'nonsense inscriptions', above all in Archaic and Classical Attic vase-painting (for bibliography, see Immerwahr 1990, esp. 44–45; cf. Lissarrague 1985; 1990, 125–135; 1992, 191–197; 1999; Henderson 1994, esp. 90–94, 103–113).

**26** On related – albeit later – games with different types of signification in early red-figure Attic vase-painting, see especially Lissarrague 1992, 200; Neer 2002, 63–64; 1995, 132–133; and Steiner 2013 (discussing a famous pelike in the Hermitage Museum of St Petersburg: inv. 615).

**27** Note too how closely related alphabetic *grammata* signal different letters according to their orientation: mu and sigma merge into the same pattern; in the case of Menelaus' name, the close resemblance is underscored by the shifting alignment of the writing. By extension, one might note how the upsilon in the name of Euphorbus mirrors not only the 'v'-shaped geometric patterns to the left of Menelaus, but also the figurative schema of Euphorbus' legs (rendered to form an upturned 'V'), the outline of the lower bodies of Menelaus and Hector, and – at ninety degrees – the bent right arm of both figures. Needless to say, I am not arguing for a 'studied' or 'knowing' set of arrangements and configured correspondences here. Rather, such internal echoes form part and parcel of the artist's play with the fluid boundaries between geometrical pattern and figurative significance.



Fig. 1.4: Detail of the same plate.

the truncated shape of the lambda in ‘Menelaus’ with a Doric Argive alphabet,<sup>28</sup> for instance, while others have noted the non-Argive (and highly idiosyncratic) rendition of the beta in ‘Euphorbus’.<sup>29</sup> But no less important is the way in which these letters complicate efforts of ‘decoding’ the picture in the first place: writing is introduced as something that exists – quite literally – *between* figurative and ornamental modes.

The point takes us to perhaps the plate’s most dazzling aspect: the flurry of pattern that occupies the upper centre, at precisely the space where the gazes of Menelaus and Hector meet (Fig. 1.4). Emerging from the circular perimeter of the frame are lines that extend into the representational space of the picture; the curving contours twist and turn like organic tendrils, before metamorphosing into two symmetrical pairs of coils, almost like the volutes of an Ionic capital. Between each set of double-spirals is an additional palmette, and connecting them below is a chequerboard design (comprising an interwoven pattern of painted and unpainted diamond shapes). At the lower edge – connected to the triangular embellishment above it, but shown behind the tip of Hector’s spear – is yet another circular embellishment, echoing in miniature the rounded shields to either side.

As compositional folly, this matrix of interconnected patterns serves to direct the viewer’s gaze towards the central action. By extending into the realm of picto-

<sup>28</sup> On the ‘Argive’ lambda, usually discussed alongside other supposed ‘Argive’ influences (cf. above, n. 11), cf. Schiering 1957, 104–105; Cook 1987, 56; Jeffery 1990, 153–154 (with 353–354 and 358, no. 47); Cook 1987, 56; Wachter 2001, 221, no. DOH 1 (with thorough bibliography). The spelling ‘Menelas’ is also Doric.

<sup>29</sup> See in particular Jeffery 1990, 154, 354 (tentatively suggesting an association with the alphabet of Kalymna), and Wachter 2001, 221, no. DOH 1. ‘The writer of our inscription will have been a foreigner, who had moved to famous Rhodes and worked there’, Wachter concludes. ‘He may have come from Kalymna. But he may also have come from Argos; for it is obvious that he would have immediately given up the peculiar “Argive” letter-form of beta in favour of the local – and widespread – standard form, whereas his lambda was sufficiently similar to the normal East Greek shape of the time not to cause any confusion ...’

rial representation, the device emphasises a vertical axis that continues all the way past Euphorbus' outstretched knee to the groundline below. Indeed, it is worth noting how, towards the bottom of the tondo, a spiral pattern emerges from the horizontal groundline, extending this vertical plane.

But there is more to this framing embellishment than first meets the eye. The conglomeration of shapes, unfolding from the frame, may look like mere decorative fancy, devoid of figurative significance. As we survey the configuration of shapes, however, our interpretive framework shifts: are we looking here at pure painterly pattern, or do we see the suggestive characters of a face that stares back at us?<sup>30</sup> On either side of the triangular chequerboard pattern – organically emerging from it like leaves – are two almond-shaped patterns that suggest eyes; at their centre are 'pupils', rendered once again as ringed circles, but this time painted in thick black silhouette. Above, traced in curving contours of diminishing painterly thickness, are two lines that are reminiscent of eyebrows: as a result, the volute-spirals take on the figurative likeness of ears; likewise, the small circular ring below the eyes suggests a nose, so that the symmetrical pairs of dots intimate, if not freckles, perhaps the tender flesh of cheeks. One might compare other frontal faces on contemporary vases, among them another plate – also from Kameiros (and likewise housed in the British Museum) – emblazoned with a running Gorgon-like winged figure (Fig. 1.5).<sup>31</sup> The similarity is striking. But so too are the differences. After all, the design on the Euphorbus Plate is redolent not just of a face, but of a head framed within a helmet – complete with crest above and tapered bronze nose-piece below. The schematic impression of that helmeted visage paradoxically brings out its figurative force, recalling the appearance

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**30** Two (brief) discussions have drawn attention to the point: Simon 1976, 55 ('Zwischen den beiden Helden erscheint ein unheimliches Augenpaar, zusammen mit einem aus hellen und dunklen Raute gemusterten "Nasenrücken" ... Vielleicht aber läßt es sich darüber hinaus auf den Zweikampf selbst beziehen, indem es Hektor und Menelaos im wortlichen Sinne voreinander schützt. Keiner von beiden wird den anderen verwunden, beide gehen unverseht aus diesem Treffen hervor'); Schefold 1993, 18 ('Oft blicken Vasen und Geräte mit solchen Augen, aber einzigartig ist es, wie Voluten auf Brauenbögen ruhen und ein Dreieck flankieren, das man mit dem Nasenschutz eines Helmes vergleichen kann, so daß das Ganze wie das Symbol eines kriegerischen Dämons wirkt. Augen sind als unheilabwehrendes Motiv uralt und weit verbreitet'). Cf. also Neer 2012, 140. More generally on the incorporation of eyes on ancient objects, see Squire 2016a, 20–24 (with further bibliographic review); cf. Boardman 1976; Martens 1992, esp. 284–363; Steinhart 1995; Rivière-Adonon 2011; compare also Haug 2015b; Grethlein 2016; and Bielfeldt 2016, esp. 136–139 (the latter discussing not only Greek 'eye-cups', but also the ways in which circular ceramic forms could themselves be rendered as 'pupils'). Compare also Kéi's discussion in this volume of an amphora and oinochoe, complete with palmette-patterns under their handles; there, as here, the addition of eyes turns the pattern into a figurative face (146).

**31** London, British Museum: inv. A748: for discussion (and comparison with the Euphorbus Plate), see Simon 1976, 55–56, no. 32; on the framing of the winged figure, cf. above, n. 17.



**Fig. 1.5:** Pottery plate, found in Kameiros on Rhodes, showing a winged goddess – with a Gorgon's head, wearing a split skirt, and holding a bird in each hand; last quarter of the seventh century BC. London, British Museum: inv. A748 (1860/0404.2).

of real-life helmets, which delighted in exploiting pattern to summon up a brazen impression of a warrior's facial likeness.<sup>32</sup>

The emergence of this face further attests to the dynamic interplay between decorative and mimetic forms. What we might have assumed to be mere ornamental exuberance – an extension of the frame, pattern devoid of representational meaning – is transformed into something pregnant with figurative potential. Once we look into the

<sup>32</sup> The most detailed catalogue – based on helmets from Olympia – is now Frielinghaus 2011 (with extensive surveys of the literature).

plate, and perceive the frontal face looking back at us, it is likewise hard to *un-see* it once more.<sup>33</sup>

To this should be added a word about the position of the motif, sandwiched as it is between the two warriors at the moment of their embattled engagement. On one level, the pair of eyes renders the plate a sort of mirror – or by analogy, one might think, a reflective shield: looking frontally at the (deeply frontal!) object, the viewer is confronted with his own stare, and the orientation of the plate is perfectly aligned with such head-on engagement.<sup>34</sup> Approached from the figurative scene in which the face emerges, however, the frontal stare is embedded within the represented action, providing the viewer with a different perspective on the scene. As our viewpoint shifts, the emerging form renders the *en face* stare between the two protagonists: it immerses viewers within the depicted action, revealing what Menelaus and Hector – rendered here in profile – themselves see. From this perspective, the face's 'helmeted' appearance takes on a particular significance: not only do viewers now experience the interlocked gaze that the plate represents, they also gain an impression of a head framed within the cosmetic surrounds of a helmet.

My opening case study – situated, of course, within its own various cultural historical, geographical and chronological frameworks<sup>35</sup> – does not provide any straightforward answer to relationships between 'ornament' and 'figure'. Nor can the Euphorbus Plate stand for some all-encompassing 'Greek' (still less 'Graeco-Roman') set of visual cultural frameworks. Yet what makes this case study so rich is the dizzying spin into which such distinctions are projected: like the eyes that emerge from the representational frame of the plate, this imagery at once delights, arrests and unsettles. To quote my opening epigraph, it functions 'to haunt, to startle, and way-lay' ...

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**33** The 'twofoldness' at play here might take us to Wollheim's key discussion of 'seeing in' in relation to 'seeing as' (Wollheim 1980, esp. 205–206 – indebted, of course, to Wittgenstein 1972, 193–229): see the chapters in this volume by Grethlein and Neer, along with the essays in Kemp and Mras (eds.) 2016. Ancient writers might be said to have anticipated parts of the thinking: cf. Squire 2013b, esp. 102–104, on Phil. VA 2.22 (with further references).

**34** On the trope of frontality, above all in Archaic Greek imagery, see Frontisi-Ducroux 1986; 1989; 1991, esp. 178–88; and 1995. The key recent discussion is Mack 2002 (on depictions of the Gorgon); cf. Hedreen 2007 and 2017; Grethlein 2016.

**35** For a (segregated!) discussion of 'ornament' in the context of contemporary painted pottery from Rhodes, see Schiering 1957, 70–90; the key work here remains Jacobsthal 1927, and cf. also Riegl 1893, 112–232. Numerous other discussions of the relationship between the 'ornamental' and 'figurative' aspects of early Greek vase-painting could be compared: for a scholarly overview, see Haug 2015a, 25–29 – and compare also the chapters in this volume by e.g. Haug, Neer and Grethlein. Fundamental are Himmelmann 1968 ('Im Gegensatz zu mancher modernen Epoche erleidet die ornamentale, scheinbar abstrakte Form im Griechischen im Allgemeinen keinen Verlust an Gegenständlichkeit', 266); Hurwit 1992 ('What happened in the sixth century ... was essentially the divorce of ornament from representation: images were images; florals were inorganic ornaments; they each had their distinct places on the vase; and that, on the whole, was that', 66–67); and Dietrich 2010, esp. 107–113.

One might go still further. After all, the suggestive power of the Euphorbus Plate lies in its invitation to think about classical visual traditions through a shifting critical lens: it reveals how the history of ancient image-making – and the rise of mimetic strategies for which Greek and Roman art is so often championed – goes hand in hand with more abstract, schematic and hybrid forms. Far from existing in a binary relationship, ornament and figure here collude and coalesce, and in a variety of engaged and complementary ways. As such, the object launches us into the very workings of ancient visual perception: it acts out a lesson in the cultures of viewing – in how both ancient and modern eyes construct meaning from what they see.

## II

Of course, ours is by no means the first volume to home in on the visual category of ornament, nor to probe its relationship with figurative forms. Over the last quarter-century, and the last decade in particular, there have been numerous calls to re-evaluate the semantics of ‘decoration’, spurring a veritable industry of ‘ornament studies’.<sup>36</sup> This revisionist agenda forms part of a larger reorientation of aesthetics and art history – a movement from the centre to the margins,<sup>37</sup> and by extension from ideas of autonomous and transcendental ‘art’ to the visual cultures surrounding each and every act of representation.<sup>38</sup> If, in the wake of the eighteenth century in particu-

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**36** Fundamental is Derrida 1987, 15–147 (translating Derrida 1978, 44–168), on *La vérité en peinture*: for a review of recent scholarship, and emphasising the importance of Derrida’s critique for approaching ancient materials, see Platt and Squire 2017, esp. 47–59. A selective sample of books and interventions – many of them discussed in more detail in the chapters that follow – would include: Camille 1992; Grabar 1992 (with stimulating review by Olin 1993); Morgan 1992; Duro (ed.) 1996; Carboni 2001; Frank and Hartung (eds.) 2001; Raulet and Schmidt (eds.) 2001; Schafter 2003; Trilling 2003; Brett 2005; Moussavi and Kubo (eds.) 2006; Zamperini 2008; Gleniger and Vrachliotis (eds.) 2009; Golsenne, Dürfeld, Roque, Scott and Warncke 2010; Beyer and Spies 2011 (alongside the other chapters in the same edited book); Payne 2012; Dekoninck, Heering and Lefftz (eds.) (2013); Picon 2013; Weinryb 2013; Necipoğlu and Payne (eds.) 2016.

**37** For a powerful demonstration of the point (applying a Derridean approach to the images drawn in the margins of mediaeval manuscripts), see Camille 1992, esp. 9–55: ‘While an examination of marginal art is timely, considering current critical debates over centre and periphery, “high” versus “low” culture and the position of the “other” or minority discourse in elitist disciplines such as art history’, as Camille’s Derrida-influenced argument puts it (10), ‘we must be careful not to think of the medieval margins in Postmodern terms ... Things written or drawn in the margins add an extra dimension, a supplement, that is able to gloss, parody, modernize and problematize the text’s authority while never totally undermining it. The centre is ... dependent upon the margins for its continued existence.’

**38** On the rise of ‘visual culture studies’, and some of the disciplinary reorientations of ‘art history’ departments over the last quarter-century, see Herbert 2003, together with the discussions in Bryson,



lar, modern critical agendas have tended to approach ornament as an effective anti-type to the work of art, even as 'ethically suspect',<sup>39</sup> postmodern and post-structuralist critics have delighted in turning the tables. As a source of alterity, pleasure and diversion, the category of ornament has consequently taken on a significance all of its own: to quote Derrida, ornament has emerged as a key 'passe-partout' for opening up cultural ideas of visual production – and as a means of deconstructing the ideological frameworks of post-Enlightenment aesthetics.<sup>40</sup>

For all their rich provocations, however, such re-evaluations have yet to penetrate classicist circles. Despite the huge importance of Graeco-Roman materials in structuring, shaping and propping up modern western aesthetics, whether in the Enlightenment or for that matter earlier in the Renaissance,<sup>41</sup> classical visual culture has been conspicuously absent in recent reappraisals of ornament.<sup>42</sup> In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, art historians have tended to overlook the formative roles of ancient art in shaping modern cultural attitudes, as indeed the purchase of post-Enlightenment heuristic categories for approaching classical images. For their part, classical archaeologists have tended to work in isolation from the larger field of art history: they have continued to apply cultural distinctions between 'ornament'

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Holly and Moxey 1994; Mitchell 1995; and Mirzoeff 1999. For some sharp-sighted overviews of the term's epistemological stakes, see Bal 2003; Elkins 2003, esp. 125–95; and Cherry 2004. On the (largely unacknowledged!) debt to earlier Germanophone art historical traditions, see Bredekamp 2003.

**39** I quote from the sharp-sighted comments of Adams 2006: 88: 'Decoration and ornament have a venerable history but that history was largely stopped in its tracks by modernist imperatives that deemed a concern with ornament ethically suspect and inimical to art and design's higher purposes. If modernist antipathy to the pleasures of decoration and ornament explains their demise, then a renewed interest in alterity may, in part, explain its revival. Over the last couple of decades, various strands of post-structuralist theory have done much to insist on the significance of modes of activity, thought and practice that the prescriptions of modernism found impossible to accommodate ... It is here, under the aegis of postmodernity, that ornament and decoration have recently assumed a renewed significance.'

**40** On the Derridean 'passe-partout' (introduced in Derrida 1987, 13), and its importance for understanding the integration of framed empty spaces, see Platt and Squire 2017, 49–52 and Zorach 2017, 594–600.

**41** Particularly important in this context is Renaissance thinking about the 'grotesque', fuelled above all by the rediscovery of Nero's Domus Aurea in the late fifteenth century: for discussion and bibliographic review, see Squire 2013c. More generally on how ancient writings about art shaped modern western frameworks of critical interpretation, cf. the impressive overview of Koch 2013. One might think here of the recourse to ancient exempla in all manner of different cultural contexts – from Renaissance rejections of Late Gothic exorbitance, through Neoclassicist rebuffs to Rococo styles, to modernist claims for 'non-ornamental' architecture in the twentieth century.

**42** Typical is e.g. Necipoğlu and Payne 2016, 4, declaring of their groundbreaking book on *Histories of Ornament: From Global to Local* that it 'purposely excluded topics of ancient ornament, in the interests of promoting a more tightly integrated volume'.

and ‘figure’, without probing how ancient and modern attitudes map onto one another.<sup>43</sup>

When it comes to modern western aesthetics, and especially to modern ideas about ornament, the influence of one Enlightenment philosopher stands out above all others: Immanuel Kant.<sup>44</sup> Kant tackled ornament within his ‘Analytic of the Beautiful’ – part of his *Critique of Judgment* (*Kritik der Urtheilskraft*), first published in 1790.<sup>45</sup> The philosophical context for Kant’s comments – within the ‘Third Moment’, above all in chapter 14 – is a discussion of the ‘pure judgment of taste’ [*das reine Geschmacksurtheil*], and a distinction between ‘empirical’ and ‘pure’ aesthetic judgments of beauty.<sup>46</sup> As is well known, Kant’s thinking was directed less to the forms of manufactured artworks than to the beauties of nature [*das Naturschöne*]. In order to explain how ‘pure’ judgments of beauty operate, Kant nonetheless adduced a number of artistic scenarios where ‘charm’ [*Reiz*] and ‘emotion’ [*Rührung*] are said to influence aesthetic response. The distinction between ‘that which gratifies in sensation’ [*was in der Empfindung vergnügt*] and ‘that which pleases by means of its form’ [*was durch seine Form gefällt*]<sup>47</sup> leads to one of Kant’s most famous art historical soundbites:<sup>48</sup>

*Selbst was man Zieraten (Parerga) nennt, d. i. dasjenige, was nicht in die ganze Vorstellung des Gegenstandes als Bestandstück innerlich, sondern nur äußerlich als Zutat gehört und das Wohlgefallen des Geschmacks vergrößert, tut dieses doch auch nur durch seine Form: wie Einfassungen der Gemälde, oder Gewänder an Statuen, oder Säulengänge um Prachtgebäude. Besteht aber der Zierat nicht selbst in der schönen Form, ist er, wie der goldene Rahmen, bloß um durch seinen Reiz das Gemälde dem Beifall zu empfehlen, angebracht, so heißt er alsdann Schmuck, und tut der echten Schönheit Abbruch.*

<sup>43</sup> More generally on the applicability (or not) of post-Enlightenment views of art for approaching ancient Graeco-Roman traditions, see the essays in Platt and Squire (eds.) 2010. Compare also – in this volume – the chapters by Hölscher, Barham and Reinhardt.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. the analyses in this volume by Neer and Platt, along with the passing discussions in the chapters by Dietrich, Barham, Reinhardt, Trimble and Elsner (on Kantian ideas of the *parergon*). A more detailed introduction to Kant’s comments can be found in Platt and Squire 2017, 38–59, on which my discussion here draws.

<sup>45</sup> The bibliography on Kant’s aesthetics is of course enormous, not least in the wake of Derrida 1987, 37–82; for a brief orientation, cf. Platt and Squire 2017, 39, n. 71. Hammermeister 2002, 21–41 offers a useful summary and critique, as well as an overview of immediate responses to Kant by both Schiller (42–61) and Schelling (62–86).

<sup>46</sup> For an overview of the context of Kant’s comments here, see Rivera de Rosales 2008; on the concept of ‘freedom’ that underpins Kant’s account, see e.g. Guyer 1993.

<sup>47</sup> Kant 1987, 69–72, translating Kant 1924, 62–6: I refer here to Werner S. Pluhar’s English translation of the *Akademie* 1793 edition; for the German text, I cite Karl Vorländer’s German edition, based on the third and last version of the text to be published during Kant’s lifetime in 1799 (with deviations from the earlier two editions signalled in the footnotes).

<sup>48</sup> Kant 1987, 72 (adapted), translating Kant 1924, 65. On Kant’s comments here – and the key response of Derrida 1987, 15–147 – see e.g. Carroll 1987, 131–54; McCloskey 1987, 60–79; Kemal 1997, 68–72; and Marriner 2002.

Even what we call ornaments [*Zieraten* (*Parerga*)] – i. e. those things which do not belong to the complete presentation of the object internally as a constituent, but only externally as a complement, and which augment our taste's liking – do so only by their form; as, for example, the frames of pictures or the draperies of statues or the colonnades around palaces. But if the ornament does not itself consist in beautiful form but is merely attached – as a golden picture-frame, so as to recommend the painting by its charm [*Reiz*] – it is then called *finery* [*Schmuck*] and takes away from genuine beauty.

In the formulation adopted in the 1793 and 1799 editions,<sup>49</sup> ornaments [*Zieraten*] are said to amount to subservient, 'parergonal' adjuncts to the central artistic *ergon*: they are removed from the work of art that they paradoxically delineate.<sup>50</sup> A little later, in the sixteenth chapter, Kant would further develop the point, explicitly adducing 'Zeichnungen à la grecque' by way of example.<sup>51</sup> While Kant himself associated such forms with what he labels 'free beauty' (*pulchritudo vaga*), as opposed to the 'adherent beauty' (*pulchritudo adhaerens*) of figurative art,<sup>52</sup> what matters is the very distinction that is drawn between the two: coloured with late eighteenth-century German ideological assumptions about the proper realm of art on the one hand, and about 'finery' or '*Schmuck*' on the other, Kantian aesthetics laid the ground for modern hierarchical segregations between the proper 'content' of an image and the superfluous frivolity of its surrounding 'adornment'.

Kant provided systematic philosophical justification for some of the most abiding tenets of modernist aesthetics. On the one hand, he established an intellectual framework for cultural distinctions between the 'fine' and 'decorative' arts, as played out in attitudes towards the 'beaux arts' and 'arts décoratifs'.<sup>53</sup> On the other, he helped

<sup>49</sup> Kant introduced the term *parerga* (as indeed the example of 'frames of pictures' [*Einfassungen der Gemälde*]) only in his second and third editions of 1793 and 1799: the term does not feature in the first, 1790 edition, although Kant did introduce the 'wie der goldene Rahmen' analogy in the final sentence of the passage cited; cf. Platt and Squire 2017, 40–42.

<sup>50</sup> On the paradox, see in particular Derrida 1987, 54 (translating Derrida 1978, 87): 'A *parergon* comes against, beside, and in addition to the *ergon*, the work done [*fait*], the fact [*le fait*], the work, but it does not fall to one side, it touches and cooperates within the operation, from a certain outside. Neither simply outside nor simply inside.' As Neer reminds us in this volume (206–207), Kant's comments in the passage do not map in any straightforward way onto the categories of ornament and figure: 'his prime example of the *parergon* was sculpted drapery, which he understood to be ancillary to, and a foil for, the rendering of the human body, even though it is depictive through and through.'

<sup>51</sup> Kant 1987, 76–78, translating Kant 1924, 69–72 (quotation from 70): for discussion, see especially Harries 1994, esp. 89–92, and Menninghaus 2000, esp. 32–9 – along with Neer's chapter in this volume.

<sup>52</sup> As Neer points out in this volume (207), 'Kant did not simply oppose figure to ornament', but 'instead ... relativized the terms in a complex, multi-dimensional way' – 'he proposed a labile relation between two subsidiary pairs: figure-ground on the one hand, and figure-ornament on the other.'

<sup>53</sup> On the formation of such segregations in the eighteenth century, the key contribution remains Kristeller 1990, 163–227 (combining two articles first published in 1951 and 1952); cf. Mortensen 1997 and Shiner 2001, with Squire 2010, esp. 137–144. For an anthology of relevant critical writings, see Frank (ed.) 2000.

to frame discussion of ornament as peripheral (even inimical) to art – and hence to art history. In the early twentieth century, Kant's hierarchical valorisation of the *ergon* over parergonal *Zieraten* gave rise to modernist calls to do away with ornament altogether. In a famous 1908 lecture on *Ornament und Verbrechen* (first published in French in 1913), Adolf Loos even went so far as to label ornament a modernist 'crime', since 'freedom from ornament is a sign of spiritual strength': 'the evolution of culture is synonymous with the removal of ornament from utilitarian objects', as Loos put it.<sup>54</sup> At the same time, this category of ornament, and its supposed remove from figurative forms, has proved central to art historical analyses of non-western visual traditions. One might think of Hegel's 1820s *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*, for example, in which ornamental and hybrid forms are associated with the 'symbolic' pre-art [*Vorkunst*] of the oriental east, necessarily preceding the figurative forms of the 'classical'.<sup>55</sup> Alternatively, consider the history of conceptualising so-called 'arabesques' – associated above all with Islamic artistic traditions, and thought to embody the 'other' to western figurative traditions.<sup>56</sup> In all such discussions, the category of 'ornament' amounts to something more than a formal quality of the image: it is loaded with social, cultural and ideological values – assumptions about what images are, no less than about what images should be.

Such assumptions about ornament, and questions about their validity, have given rise to a flurry of recent reappraisals. While 'ornament' was not of course a completely marginalised aspect of later nineteenth- and twentieth-century criticism,<sup>57</sup> there can be no denying – as the editors to an important recent anthology put it – that 'orna-

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<sup>54</sup> For the earliest French publication of 'Ornement et crime', see *Les cahiers d'aujourd'hui* 5 (June, 1913), 247–256; the German translation of 'Ornament und Verbrechen' appeared in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* (24 October 1929). An English translation can be found in Loos 1998, 167–176 – and on the history of publication, see Adolf Opel's introduction (7–17) within the same book. On modernist appropriations of Loos' arguments, and their response to nineteenth-century traditions of theorising ornament, see Banham 1957; Long 1997 and 2012; Trilling 2003, 119–136, and di Palma 2016, esp. 21–23; cf. also Platt's chapter in this volume. On the immediate backdrop to Loos' comments – analysed not just against the supposed 'crisis' of the decorative arts in a world of industrialisation, but also against the arts and crafts and emerging art nouveau movements – see Gombrich 1979.

<sup>55</sup> For the most frequently cited English translation of Hegel's oral lectures (based on the second, 1842 edition by H. G. Hotho), see Hegel 1975. Bibliography on Hegelian aesthetics is currently booming; for an anthology of different disciplinary perspectives, see Kottman and Squire (eds.) 2018.

<sup>56</sup> The most scintillating introduction to the historiography of the arabesque – centred in particular around the intellectual archaeology and influence of Riegl 1893 (translated as Riegl 1992) is Flood 2016 – with detailed further bibliography in the notes at 362–363; cf. Kühnel 1977; Grabar 1992 (with Olin 1993); and Necipoğlu 1995; on underlying Enlightenment aesthetic frameworks, see e.g. Harries 1994 and Menninghaus 2000.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Neer's chapter in this volume – discussing e.g. Jones 1856 and Gombrich 1979, as well as the intervening work of Gottfried Semper and Alois Riegl. Many of the interventions cited above (n. 36) offer more detailed overviews of the scholarly historiography: see in particular Gombrich 1979, 33–62; Schafer 2003, 15–59; and Brett 2005, 106–136.

ment is back'.<sup>58</sup> Despite Loos' modernist calls to dispense with ornament, contemporary architects are delighting in its rehabilitation in ever more playful ways.<sup>59</sup> Within scholarly circles too, ornament has emerged as one of the foremost concerns of 'visual culture studies', not only in reassessing western traditions, but also within current calls for more 'global' and 'comparative' modes of art history.<sup>60</sup>

It is here, contributors to this book argue, that Graeco-Roman materials have the potential to play a key critical role – at once so integral to the formulation of modern western aesthetics, and yet culturally removed from those critical frameworks. It is not that classical art historians have failed to discuss the relationship between 'ornament' and 'figure'.<sup>61</sup> If our volume has a polemic, it is rather that their discussions have been carried out in hermetic isolation from the larger field of art historical enquiry. Two problems stand out in particular. The first lies in the uncritical way in which so much classical scholarship has applied post-Enlightenment ideas about ornamental and figurative forms: scholars have imposed modern interpretative frameworks onto their ancient materials without questioning the validity of doing so.<sup>62</sup> A second – and very much associated – problem lies in the classificatory manner in which the 'ornamental' forms of Greek and Roman art have been discussed. For classical archaeologists, the 'ornamental' aspects of ancient visual culture have predominantly served the ends of taxonomy and typology: in studying all manner of different media – whether Greek vase-painting, for example, architectural assemblages, Roman frescoes or mosaics – scholars have approached ornament as a means of categorising materials, usually studying the decorative 'surrounds' in isolation from the figurative forms that they frame.<sup>63</sup> The tendency is in one sense understandable, providing as it does a means

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**58** Necipoğlu and Payne 2016, 1: 'From our vantage point today,' the editors continue, 'what seemed a definitive and irreversible death blow to ornament turned out to be only an ushering in of a protracted phase of its disappearance.'

**59** For discussion, see especially Brolin 2001 and Payne 2012, along with Platt's chapter in this book (discussing numerous recent contemporary case studies; cf. the chapters by Picon, di Palma and Sarkis in Necipoğlu and Payne (eds.) 2016, 10–43 – on the 'contemporaneity of ornament in architecture' (with more detailed further bibliography).

**60** For some of the most scintillating recent interventions, see e.g. Elkins 2007; Carrier 2008; Belting 2011 (translating an influential German book first published in 2001); and Elsner (ed.) 2017. Particularly important here is the anthropological approach of Gell 1998, re-thinking 'ornament' (and the 'technology of enchantment', 76) from the perspective of agency.

**61** Some of the richest work has been in the context of Late Geometric Greek vase-painting (e.g. Himmlemann 1968; Hurwit 1992; Haug 2015a). One might also compare Verity Platt's recent discussions of Campanian wall-painting (above all Platt 2009, with her discussion in this volume); Platt's work stands in stark contrast to e.g. Sauron 2000, which instead reads Augustan ornamental motifs as loaded with allegorical political significance (cf. Squire 2013a, 271–272).

**62** For a related polemic, see e.g. Platt and Squire 2017, 6, n. 12 – responding to the associated project of Ehlich 1953 on *Bild und Rahmen in der Antike*.

**63** For a brief overview – with discussion of the scholarly frameworks established by e.g. August Mau, Sir John Beazley and Lucy Shoe Merritt – see Platt and Squire 2017, esp. 9–12.

of cataloguing, attributing and dating material. But it comes at a substantial cost: the fundamental question that scholars have failed to ask is whether – and indeed how – categories of ‘ornament’ and ‘figure’ served to structure the ancient field of visual representation.

### III

Our book cannot aspire to offer a comprehensive treatment of ornament and figure in Graeco-Roman visual culture. Rather than provide some encyclopaedic overview of how these categories did or did not play out in ancient art, our aim has been more provocative. Most previous art historical studies start out from accepted assumptions about what ornament and figure entail: they turn to particular case studies either to confirm or refute preconceived intellectual ideas. In looking to ancient materials, by contrast, we have encouraged contributors to re-think those visual forms have been so pivotal in shaping modern western approaches, and yet which prove culturally distant and removed: by exploring the fluidity between the poles, we invited contributors to generate new ways of defining, conceptualising and problematising such semantic distinctions.

Tonio Hölscher begins with an ambitiously transhistorical survey, focused above all on architectural materials.<sup>64</sup> For Hölscher, ancient ‘ornament’ functioned very differently from the ways assumed by modern western viewers: Greek notions of *kosmos*, related in turn to Roman ideas of *decor* and *ornamentum*, served to counterbalance the mimetic dimensions of ancient art; rather than serve ‘representation’ – in the sense of ‘making present’ – ‘cosmetic’ elements had the role of bestowing and embellishing cultural value.<sup>65</sup> To demonstrate the point, Hölscher discusses a variety of architectural case studies, while also introducing a range of visual media (including bronze vessels, three-dimensional sculpture and plastic reliefs). At the same time, he exploits shifting chronological ideas about ornament and figure to trace a continuous history of Greek architectural embellishment, stretching from the Early Archaic world (discussed here in connection with the seventh-century temple at Prinias) to Imperial Roman monuments (above all, the Augustan *Ara Pacis*).

Jonas Grethlein takes a different tack. Like Hölscher, he is concerned with the history of semantic distinctions between ornament and figure in antiquity, and not least the relationships between ancient and modern attitudes. Where Hölscher’s essay is structured along chronological lines, however, Grethlein’s contribution

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<sup>64</sup> The subject of ancient architectural adornment has come in for renewed interest in recent years: see especially the contributions to Lipps and Maschek (eds.) 2014.

<sup>65</sup> Hölscher’s comments here draw on earlier pioneering discussions: see especially Hölscher 2009 and 2015, 38–47.

adopts a more phenomenological and diachronic approach. In particular, his chapter seeks to redirect attention away from 'ornament' as something that can be defined in formal terms and towards the pictorial category of the 'ornamental' – that is, as an aspect of the representing medium that spills into the level of the represented object. Grethlein explains his thinking with reference to the famous Protoattic amphora from Eleusis (Figs. 3.2–3.3; cf. Fig. 8.6), demonstrating the fluidity between its 'figurative' and 'ornamental' forms. Still more ambitiously, he applies his interpretive framework to a parallel phenomenon in verbal narrative: like the ornamental aspects of contemporary vase-painting, the repeated, 'formulaic' language of Homeric epic has the capacity to generate meaning beyond what it formally denotes.<sup>66</sup> In a final flourish, Grethlein examines the transhistorical applicability of his theoretical approach ('no matter the medium, no matter the epoch', 94): if the 'ornamental' is a category of pictures in general, and one with close parallels in verbal narrative, its specific forms are always dependent on the presiding cultural conventions of representation.

Annette Haug's chapter is in some ways an attempt to square Hölscher's historical framework with Grethlein's more theoretical approach. Of all the contributions to this book, hers stretches furthest back in time: she deals with the very origins of Greek figurative art, above all in the context of Late Geometric painted pottery.<sup>67</sup> At the same time, Haug's predominant concern lies in the interface between the representational pictorial space of vase-painting and its delineation within a three-dimensional, ceramic object. Fluctuations between the ornamental and figurative aspects of Geometric vase-painting, she argues, go hand in hand with the interplay between pictorial representation and plastic form: to demonstrate the point, Haug examines how suggestive three-dimensional forms could function alongside painted two-dimensional embellishments – whether bringing to mind other sorts of objects, alluding to zoomorphic shapes, or incorporating additional plastic elements.

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<sup>66</sup> In this connection, it is worth noting how the Greek language of *kosmos* (and above all the verb *kosmein*) could be used as a critical term for pictorial *and* poetic embellishment: even as early as in the Homeric epics, we hear of rhapsodists and speakers 'adorning' a spoken performance (e.g. *Il.* 2.214 and *Od.* 8.492; Neer 1995, 147, n. 13 also compares, e.g., Pl. *Ion* 530d and Gorg. fr. B11). While focused on Homeric epic, Grethlein's transmedial approach to the 'ornamental' as a category crossing between visual and verbal forms might lead us to all manner of other case studies. One might think in particular of Hellenistic and Imperial Greek *technopaegnia* (*Anth. Pal.* 15.21–22, 24–27), and above all of the 'pictorial-poetic' *carmina cancellata* of Optatian (Publius Optatianus Porphyrius) in the early fourth century; for discussion, frequently touching on the interplay between pattern and figurative designs, see the essays in Squire and Wienand (eds.) 2017; cf. Squire 2016b and 2017b.

<sup>67</sup> Haug's discussion forms part of an approach to Geometric vase-painting developed in her important book on *Bild und Ornament im frühen Athen* (Haug 2015a). On the 'ornamental' aspects of Geometric art, and their association with the 'Oriental' east, particularly influential was Poulsen 1912, esp. 108–116: while arguing that 'die dunkelsten Zeiten der hellenischen Kunst nicht ohne Strahlen der ewig leuchtenden, östlichen Sonne gewesen sind' (116), Poulsen suggested that the history of Greek figurative art emerges from the contact with more 'primitive' and 'oriental' eastern traditions.

François Lissarrague continues the focus on painted pottery, albeit proceeding to Attic black- and red-figure vase-painting from the sixth and fifth centuries BC. His specific subject lies in the motif of warriors ‘adorning’ themselves with cuirasses, greaves and helmets – the phenomenon referred to in ancient Greek as *kosmêsis*. Greek armour is a particularly rich source for thinking about ornament and figure: if arms were intended to conceal the body of a warrior (covering it in a brazen trim), they also had to align with his figurative frame; by extension, the very adornments of extant cuirasses and greaves play upon an instability, often oscillating between abstract designs and patterns that bring to mind the suggestive outline of hidden anatomical forms. Rather than survey surviving bronze materials themselves, Lissarrague here explores the ways in which Attic vase-painters turned to the visual representation of armour to offer their own meditative mediation of such themes. On the one hand, clear parallels can be drawn between the vase-painter’s articulation of bronze surface and his own adornments of the pot (as demonstrated with reference to scale and palmette patterns). On the other hand, Lissarrague demonstrates how the combined figurative and ornamental forms of armour proffered a rich means for contemplating the ‘cosmetic’ embellishments of vase-painting at large: with typical self-reflexive artistry, Attic painters clothed the subject of *kosmêsis* with a distinctive pictorial panoply of representational games.

Representational games also lie at the core of Nikolina Kéi’s chapter. Like Lissarrague, Kéi discusses Attic black- and red-figure vases. Rather than focus on a single iconographic subject, however, she homes in on the figures, objects and floral elements that occupy the area beneath a pot’s handles.<sup>68</sup> Here, as in the earlier Geometric materials discussed by Haug, the plastic form of a vase collides with its two-dimensional space for pictorial representation. And yet, Kéi argues, these painted motifs could also help viewers to grasp – to get a literal and metaphorical hold on – larger issues of semantic interpretation. As she concludes, these motifs defy modern ideological distinctions between the figurative and the ornamental. While in one sense occupying a ‘marginal’ position within the architectural frame of the vase, the images painted beneath the handles of a pot could nonetheless influence visual interpretation in a variety of ways – by separating or interconnecting the two sides, for example, directing the viewer’s gaze, or by diverting attention away from other registers. The area, in short, is handled with a potential suggestive significance of its own: by underscoring, qualifying or undercutting the scenes that they frame, the space around the handles provides an axis around which visual interpretation could pivot.

The interface between three-dimensional, plastic forms and two-dimensional surface is also one of the themes addressed in Nikolaus Dietrich’s chapter – now turning from vase-painting to Archaic and Early Classical Greek sculpture. As Die-

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<sup>68</sup> Kéi’s contribution here draws on a rich assemblage of earlier work (too little known in Anglophone scholarship): in addition to Kéi 2010, see also Kéi 2011 and most recently Kéi 2016.



trich explains, the poles of ornament and figure are fundamental to modern scholarly narratives about the 'Greek revolution' and the rise of Classical mimetic forms:<sup>69</sup> Archaic artists, to quote John Boardman, 'treated the ... body almost as an exercise in pattern and composition'.<sup>70</sup> Such critical modes prove deeply problematic when it comes to sixth-century Attic sculpture, Dietrich argues, since the supposedly 'ornamental' systems of pattern and deviation could in fact be harnessed for a variety of 'figurative' ends. This leads to a different history of Greek sculpture, and to a new explanation for both the 'demise' of Archaic modes and the rise of more naturalistic and mimetic forms.<sup>71</sup> Fundamental are the shifting attitudes to what Dietrich terms the 'contingency' of the sculpted representation. The transition between Archaic and Classical strategies forms part of a radical change in conceptualising visual form: on the one hand, a shift away from the statue as a site for conspicuous artistic display; on the other, a movement towards approaching it as a self-standing entity in its own right ('a causality intrinsic to the mimetically produced reality itself', 168).

The next chapter, by Richard Neer, in one sense brings together the themes of the preceding six chapters. As his title makes clear, Neer examines how Greek distinctions between ornament and figure evolved over time: incorporating analysis of vase-painting, architecture and sculpture (in particular the caryatids of the Erechtheum), he proceeds chronologically from the 'Geometric' to the 'Classical'. But the chapter does something else besides. While 'ornament' and 'figure' can be understood as transhistorical and essential categories, Neer argues, relationships between the two are always historically determined. With reference to the first claim, the chapter takes its lead from *Gestalt* psychology (the intersections with Grethlein's chapter are particularly rich here): notions of 'figurality' and 'ornamentality' are not properties that inhere in an object, the chapter argues, but rather rely on the eye of the beholder ('ornament is more a way of seeing than a coherent class of entity in the world', 209). With regards to the second claim, Neer traces how Greek distinctions between the ornamental and the figurative – as indeed between figure and ground – always take on an ideological dimension: with the rise of ever more complex narrative scenes from the eighth to seventh centuries, the very boundaries between ornament and figure could be manipulated to distinguish between different viewing communities, and above all between social and political groups.

With Verity Platt's contribution, the book begins a gradual transition towards 'Roman' visual forms.<sup>72</sup> Platt takes her cue from the so-called 'materialist turn' within

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<sup>69</sup> For one of most influential accounts, see Gombrich 1977, 99–125; cf. Gombrich 1950, 49–64.

<sup>70</sup> Boardman 1996, 86.

<sup>71</sup> Fundamental here is now Neer 2010; cf. Elsner 2006; Tanner 2006, esp. 31–96; Squire 2011b, 32–68 (with further bibliography at 209–213).

<sup>72</sup> The most sustained attempt to re-think 'Roman' ideas of decoration is Swift 2009 – with provocative overview at 1–25 and conclusions at 187–195: Swift champions social functions, discussing do-

the humanities, exploring its ramifications for approaching first-century AD cultural attitudes.<sup>73</sup> Setting aside Kantian aesthetic hierarchies, and exploring ancient terminologies of *ornamentum* and *parergon*, the chapter uses ancient materials to re-think post-Enlightenment segregations of the figurative from the ornamental. More specifically, Platt examines the materialist cosmologies of Stoic philosophy as a way of making sense of ‘material culture’. Such philosophical parameters play a key role in shaping Roman cultural attitudes towards medium, form and meaning, she argues; likewise, Stoic philosophy can help us to unpack important questions about aesthetic, biological and cosmological systems played out in Roman art. Platt demonstrates the point in two ways. First, adopting a literary perspective, she examines Pliny the Elder’s account of painting in Book 35 of his *Natural History*: the seemingly ‘parergonal’ features of Plinian art history embody broader structuring patterns, informed by assumptions about *natura* as rational force. Second, from an archaeological perspective, Platt turns to the contemporary decorative schemes of Campanian wall-painting, taking the House of the Gilded Cupids in Pompeii as her case study. The assemblage of different painterly elements in this house offers a material counterpart to Pliny’s materialist concerns, she concludes: Roman frescoes manifest a parallel cultural preoccupation with the themes that imbue Pliny’s account – an interest in the capacity of material form to manifest the *physis* of natural materials on the one hand, and a concern with human practices of artistic imitation and adornment on the other.

The terminology of ‘ornament’ – and its embellishment with anachronistic, post-Enlightenment ideologies of value – forms an elegant bridge with Nicola Barham’s chapter. One of the recurrent difficulties that contributors to this book have faced is the difficulty of finding a language in which to describe the visual components of Graeco-Roman imagery. But what, asks Barham, is at stake in our recourse to the word ‘ornament’ itself? The English term – like its cognates in French, German and other European languages – derives from a Latin word: *ornamentum*. Yet, as Barham emphasises, Latin *ornamenta* encompass an array of semantic meanings that are quite removed from those of its modern-day derivatives. To demonstrate the point, the chapter assembles an array of ancient *testimonia* – from literary texts through to monumental inscriptions, relating to a gamut of different visual media and forms. At the same time, Barham uses her literary materials to challenge any straightforward distinction between the ‘ornamental’ and the ‘figurative’ in the Roman cultural mindset: far from delineating something as marginal or inferior, she argues, the rhetoric of *ornamentum* served to champion an image’s visual power; referring to a range

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mestic mosaics, vessels, jewellery and dress. Particularly relevant for our project is Swift’s analysis of ‘non-figurative floor mosaics’ at 27–104: cf. Muth’s chapter in this book.

73 For the ‘materialist turn’ and its importance for re-thinking Graeco-Roman art history, see now Platt 2016.

of figurative forms, this term functioned both to celebrate an image's impact and to define it in relation to the surrounding visual environment.

Where Barham discusses Latin texts, Arne Reinhardt turns to a single material case study to explore the associated aesthetics of Roman *decor*: a so-called 'Neoattic' sculpted marble drum from the first-century BC, originally used as the head of a well. The object – now housed in Schloss Tegel in Berlin – is decorated with a Dionysian frieze, and around its three-dimensional circular span we find the repeated form of a standing satyr. The schema occurs three times in total: in each case, the satyr is shown with the same backward turn of the head, and with legs and arms in closely related pose. But what should we make of such iconographic repetition? Classical archaeological interpretations have traditionally associated this sort of 'uninventive' replication with an assumed lack of 'artistic' originality. By contrast, Reinhardt advances a radically different explanation, pointing to a fundamental discrepancy between post-Enlightenment attitudes and those circulating (literally and figuratively) around his marble drum. Rather than functioning as 'parergonal' pattern, and far from signalling some visual deficiency, this sort of figurative reiteration – paralleled in numerous other Roman 'decorative' contexts – was a highly valued element of Roman artistic production. Seen from this perspective, the ornamental repetition of the figure can be understood in relation to contemporary rhetorical ideas of *variatio* (as discussed by the likes of Cicero, Quintilian and the Younger Pliny).<sup>74</sup> At the same time, the discrepancies between ancient and modern approaches point to a larger cultural historical divergence between post-Kantian ideas of 'decoration' and Roman aesthetic ideals of decorous decoration.

The following two contributions, by Jennifer Trimble and Jaś Elsner, both relate to the interplay of ornament and figure in Roman funerary art. While Trimble focuses on a single case study from the second century AD (the Tomb of the Haterii just outside Rome), Elsner surveys the corpus of Roman sarcophagi from the second and third centuries. Despite their different subjects, both chapters explore not only the slippage between 'figurative' and 'ornamental' motifs, but also the significance of such self-referential play within mortuary contexts.<sup>75</sup>

As Trimble explains, the imagery surrounding the Tomb of the Haterii is particularly rich for approaching Roman ideas about ornament and figure. The tomb is famous for its so-called 'crane relief' (Fig. 12.1), one of the most frequently reproduced images in introductory surveys of Roman art. As the chapter explains, however, the imagery of this relief has to be understood within the framework of the tomb as a whole, inviting viewers to differentiate between figurative and ornamental forms only

<sup>74</sup> Fundamental on Roman rhetoric ideas of replication, and their significance for approaching contemporary visual culture, is Anguissola 2012; more generally on the importance of rhetoric for approaching the workings of Roman visual culture, see the essays in Elsner and Meyer (eds.) 2014.

<sup>75</sup> For further comments here – in relation to 'framing' the dead – see Platt 2017 and Squire 2017a.

to problematise any such semantic distinctions. Trimble discusses numerous aspects of the monumental complex – animal figures that look like vegetal patterns leaping up pilasters, for example, and cupids carved as figurative and vegetal hybrids. Ultimately, she argues that the very interaction between figurative and ornamental forms mediated ontological questions about transformation, mediality and loss.

Elsner's chapter picks up the themes of Trimble's analysis – in particular, her discussion of 'framing' and *mise en abyme*. Taking as his case study the sculptural adornment of Roman sarcophagi, Elsner examines those visual elements which self-consciously replicate, allude to or comment upon other elements in the same object. His chapter's 'neoformalist' approach richly intersects with Reinhardt's discussion of figurative repetition. Here, though, the concern lies in both Roman cultural attitudes to the visual sphere and the use of images to frame the dead: the very decoration of a sarcophagus posed fundamental questions about materiality, form and the body contained within.

The last chapter, by Susanne Muth, introduces an additional final medium: mosaics. No less importantly, Muth also expands the chronological and geographical framework of the book, incorporating discussion of both Roman Imperial and late-antique mosaics, and from across the Roman Empire. Classical archaeological scholarship has conventionally drawn a straightforward distinction between the 'figurative' and 'ornamental' components of Roman mosaics, Muth argues. Yet what is most striking about the examples discussed here is their blurring of such categories – the 'ornamentation' of 'figures', as she puts it, no less than the 'figuralisation' of 'ornaments'. Developing the arguments of other contributors (especially Platt, Barham, Reinhardt and Elsner), Muth relates this interplay back to Roman cultural and rhetorical ideas about *decor* and *ornamentum*. The different components of mosaic design, she concludes, share a similar set of aims and objectives, oriented around the interaction with the viewer on the one hand, and the definition of space on the other.

As the brief overview above suggests, our volume does not offer an exhaustive treatment. It will already be clear that our project brings together a range of experts, with different medial interests, academic backgrounds and interpretative agendas. As a collective, though, the book aims to be more than the sum of its parts: by re-thinking the relationship between antiquity and subsequent western traditions, it hopes to bring the *kosmos* of Graeco-Roman art into renewed and productive contact with the constellations of art history.

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Tonio Hölscher

# **Figürlicher Schmuck in der griechischen Architektur zwischen Dekor und Repräsentation**

## **Antinomien von Figur und Ornament**

Im Schmuck griechischer Tempel treffen sich Figuren und Ornamente. Damit sind zwei fundamentale Funktionen der visuellen Kunst angesprochen, die wohl für die meisten Kulturen historischer Gesellschaften konstitutiv sind: Repräsentation und Dekor.<sup>1</sup>

*Repräsentation: Herstellung von Präsenz.* Repräsentation im hier gemeinten Sinn ist eine Grundkategorie der visuellen Kultur: die Herstellung von Präsenz im Bild.<sup>2</sup> Bildwerke haben die Aufgabe, bedeutungsvollen Wesen, Gegenständen und Vorgängen eine materielle Präsenz zu geben, die sie tatsächlich nicht besitzen, weil sie sich in räumlicher oder zeitlicher Distanz befinden oder rein in der Vorstellung existieren. Die wichtigsten Formen bildlicher Repräsentation sind Standbilder, in zweiter Linie Reliefs und Gemälde in großem Format. In der bildhaften materiellen Repräsentation machen sie der aktuellen Gesellschaft den kulturellen Umgang mit den dargestellten Wesen, Gegenständen und Vorgängen in sozialen Praktiken, Ritualen und Diskursen möglich. Damit beziehen sie sich referentiell auf eine – zeitlich vergangene, räumlich entfernte oder auch rein imaginierte – Realität, die eine eigene körperliche Autonomie besitzt. Diese Autonomie äußert sich im Bild darin, dass die Form so weit wie möglich frei ist von heteronomen Rahmenbedingungen und im Wesentlichen die konzeptuelle Auffassung von der Körperlichkeit der dargestellten Figuren und Gegenstände zur Erscheinung bringt.

*Dekor: Steigerung von Wert.* Dekor im hier gemeinten Sinn ist nicht die häufig diffamierte, oberflächliche und überflüssige Verzierung, sondern bedeutet eine Grundkategorie der ästhetischen Kultur: Schmuck als ‚Pretiosierung‘, als Steigerung von kulturellem ‚Wert‘.<sup>3</sup> Jedes materielle Element der menschlichen Lebenskultur, das über die Erfüllung rein praktischer Funktionen hinaus eine kulturelle ‚Bedeutung‘ hat, wird in seiner visuellen Form als Träger solcher Bedeutung ausgezeichnet. Diese Auszeichnung erhebt ‚Gegenstände‘ der kulturellen Praxis im weitesten Sinn,

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<sup>1</sup> Zum Folgenden siehe vorläufig T. Hölscher 2015a, 25–51.

<sup>2</sup> Vernant 1985, 325–338 und 339–351; Niemeyer 1996; Stähli 2002, 67–84; F. Hölscher 2014, 239–256; T. Hölscher 2015a, 25–38.

<sup>3</sup> Zur Definition des Ornaments siehe in diesem Band: Squire, 16–22; Grethlein, 73–77; Neer, 203–209; Barham.

von Geräten der Religion und der Festlichkeit über Kleider und Abzeichen des sozialen Ranges bis zu Gebäuden und Anlagen des religiösen, politischen und sozialen Lebens, zu ‚Bedeutung‘ in dem doppelten Sinn von *importance* und *meaning*. Dekor in diesem Sinn des Schmückens dient der Steigerung von kulturellem Wert und Sinn. Dabei werden im Wesentlichen vier Faktoren eingesetzt:

- Wertvolle Materialien, die zugleich symbolische Bedeutung haben können, wie etwa Gold oder Purpur,
- vollendete Technik der Bearbeitung, die dem Gegenstand den Wert der Schönheit gibt,
- Ornamente, die den ästhetischen Überschuss des Gegenstands über die praktische Funktionalität darstellen,
- Ausstattung mit figürlichen Bildern, die den kulturellen ‚Sinn‘ des Gegenstands zur Anschauung bringen.

*Materialien* und *Technik* betreffen die Gegenstände in ihrer ganzheitlichen materiellen Präsenz, Ornamente und figürliche Bilder dagegen stellen zusätzliche Elemente dar, die in einem spezifischen Verhältnis zu dem Gegenstand stehen.

*Ornamente* stehen in einer unlöslichen Beziehung zu ihren Gegenständen. Sie haben die Aufgabe, den kulturellen Wert des Gegenstandes durch drei visuelle Prinzipien zu steigern: durch Gliederung, Akzentuierung und Belebung. Die bekannte goldene Truhe aus dem Fürstengrab von Vergina erhält ihren Wert durch das ‚königliche‘ Material Gold und durch hohen technischen Aufwand (Abb. 2.1). Durch ihre reichen Ornamente wird sie zum einen in ihrer Struktur und ihrem Aufbau gegliedert und definiert: durch senkrechte Pilaster an den Ecken, waagerechte Planken an den Seiten oben und unten, Reihen von Ziernägeln entlang den Kanten, rahmende Leisten am Deckel, Knäufe an den Ecken. Zum anderen erhält sie durch vegetabile und theriomorphe Motive eine bedeutungsvolle Lebendigkeit: durch Löwenfüße, Rosetten, Rankengeschlinge, Lotos und Palmetten. Auf dem Deckel erscheint als akzentuierendes Leitmotiv ein großer ‚makedonischer‘ Stern. Wert und Bedeutung bilden eine Einheit.<sup>4</sup>

Im Bezug auf den Träger des Schmuckes werden einige Grundprinzipien des ornamentalen Schmückens deutlich. Die Rosetten und die senkrechten Reihen der Nägel entwickeln sich in der Form der *Serialität*, der Fries von Palmetten und Lotosblüten und die waagerechten Nägel darüber in der Form des abwechselnden symmetrischen *Rapports*. Der Fries von Ranken entfaltet sich aus einem zentralen Kelch von Akanthus nach dem Prinzip der *Symmetrie*. Die Leisten am Deckel dienen der *Rahmung*, die Knäufe verstärken die Rahmung durch Markierung der vorderen Ecken. Der Stern

<sup>4</sup> Gold-Truhe Vergina: Andronikos 1989, 168–171, fig. 135–136. Zum ‚makedonischen Stern‘ siehe Mitropoulou 1993, 843–958; Fredricksmeier 1997, 103; Müller 2009, 364–380.



**Abb. 2.1:** Goldtruhe aus dem Königsgrab von Vergina, 340–320 v. Chr. Thessaloniki, Archaiologikon Mouseion.

wirkt durch seine gerahmte *Zentralität*. In allen diesen Formen sind Ornamente auf ihren Träger bezogen: Es gibt kein autonomes Ornament.<sup>5</sup>

*Figürlicher Schmuck* hat die Aufgabe, den kulturellen Wert des Gegenstandes durch bildliche Darstellung von Figuren zu steigern und mit deren komplexen kulturellen Bedeutungen zu bereichern. Damit wird aber ein grundsätzlicher Konflikt zwischen Repräsentation und Dekor eingeführt. Denn die Bilder haben zunächst andere Aufgaben, mit anderen Erfordernissen als denen des Schmückens: die Präsent-Machung von Gestalten und Vorgängen. Während die Bilder als Repräsentation von Gestalten, Handlungen und Vorgängen eine genuine Autonomie besitzen, werden sie gleichzeitig heteronom durch die Strukturen der zu schmückenden Gegenstände bestimmt. Diesen Vorgaben der Bildträger ordnen die Figuren der Bilder sich aber nicht ohne Widerstand unter: Die Repräsentation von Figuren und Handlungen lässt sich nicht *eo ipso* mit ornamentalen Prinzipien wie Serialität, Rapport, Symmetrie, Gerahmtheit und Zentralität vereinbaren. Dieser latente Konflikt zwischen Ornament und Figur, die Heteronomie von Dekor und Repräsentation, ist im figürlichen Schmuck von Gegenständen und Bauwerken in immer wieder neuer Form und mit vielfach variierenden Prioritäten ausgetragen worden.

<sup>5</sup> Zu Grundprinzipien des Ornaments siehe in diesem Band insbesondere: Grethlein, 73–77; Haug, 97–101; Dietrich, 172–179; Barham, bes. 281–289.

Der berühmte Bronzekrater aus dem Grab einer fürstlichen Frau bei Vix in Südfrankreich<sup>6</sup> trägt um den Hals einen Relieffries mit der Darstellung eines Zuges von Kriegern, in dem sich ein Wagen mit vier Pferden sowie einem Lenker mit Helm und ein vornehmer Krieger in voller Rüstung zu Fuß abwechseln (Abb. 2.2). Ob eine rituelle Prozession oder ein feierlicher Auszug in den Krieg geschildert wird, ist schwer zu entscheiden; im Grundkonzept unterscheiden sich die beiden Themen nicht sehr. Die Pferde sind in stark unterschiedlichen Haltungen dargestellt und scheinen damit ‚realistisch‘ die lebendige Vielfalt der Bewegungen bei dem Vorgang wiederzugeben. Doch die einzelnen Gespanne, mitsamt den Lenkern und den nachfolgenden Kriegern, sind in völlig identischer Form aufgereiht. Der ‚Realität‘ ist wiederum die Ausrichtung des Zuges nach rechts geschuldet, die eine axiale Symmetrie unmöglich macht. Doch dabei steht ein Krieger in der Mittelachse des Gefäßes, und auf beiden Seiten sind bis zu den Henkeln je zwei Gespanne mit schreitenden Kriegern in völlig identischen Abständen zu sehen. Die Prozession ist somit ohne alle Variationen, wie sie in anderen Bildwerken dieser Zeit durchaus üblich sind, als regelmäßiger, nach rechts gerichteter Rapport gestaltet und in seiner Anordnung streng ‚ornamental‘ auf das Gefäß bezogen.

Die Ansätze der Volutenhenkel sind mit Gorgonen geschmückt, deren Körper in extremer Weise für ihre ornamentale Funktion verformt sind. Die Figuren sind mit der frontalen Gorgonenfratze und symmetrisch angewinkelten Armen nach außen gerichtet; ihr Körper ist so beschnitten, dass unmittelbar unter der Brust mit dem kurzen Wams zwei Schlangen-‚Beine‘ herauswachsen, die sich zu beiden Seiten zur technischen Verstärkung der Befestigung auf die Schulter des Gefäßes legen. Zwei weitere Schlangen, deren Ansatz an ihrem Körper nicht deutlich ist, winden sich um ihre Oberarme und richten sich symmetrisch zu Seiten ihres Gesichts auf. Im Henkel sind Löwen in unorganischer Haltung, mit aufgerichtetem Körper und zurückgedrehtem Kopf, in die Zwickel des Volutenhenkels eingepasst. Monster, Tiere, Henkel und Gefäßkörper vereinen sich zu einem Gebilde von höchster ornamentaler Künstlichkeit.<sup>7</sup>

Im Zentrum des Deckels steht eine weibliche Figur, in vornehmen Kleidern, durch einen Schleier auf dem Kopf, Opferkanne in der linken und Opferschale in der vorgestreckten rechten Hand (beide zu ergänzen) als Braut ausgezeichnet, die sich auf die Krieger bezieht. Mit ihrem stark säulenhaften Wuchs besitzt sie fast die ‚ornamentale‘

<sup>6</sup> Rolley 2003, 77–143.

<sup>7</sup> Der Konflikt zwischen Repräsentation und Ornament reicht bis in die Details der Figuren. Das kann hier nicht weiter verfolgt werden. Er wird pointiert deutlich am Bild der Gorgo, etwa am Krater von Vix: Die repräsentierte (vorgestellte) Realität ist eine Fratze von extremer Hässlichkeit, die ‚künstlerische‘ Gestaltung ist von exquisiter Perfektion und Schönheit: Die Stirnlocken der Gorgonen sind ebenso brillant ornamental gestaltet wie die Ornamentbänder der Henkel, siehe Rolley 2003, Taf. 98–99. Die Hässlichkeit bezieht sich auf das Thema, die Schönheit auf das Werk, als Gegenstand der Lebenskultur bzw. des religiösen Kults.





**Abb. 2.2:** Bronzekerter aus dem Fürstinnengrab von Vix, Ende 6. Jh. v. Chr. Châtillon-sur-Seine, Musée du Pays Châtillonnais.

Form eines länglichen Knaufes. Dem gegenüber bedingt die Realität des menschlichen Körpers und insbesondere das Motiv von Arm und Hand eine Abweichung von der ‚ornamentalen‘ Rundung eines Knaufes.

Am Krater von Vix ist der Konflikt zwischen den abstrakten Prinzipien des Ornaments und der körperlichen Realität der Figuren in einem besonders hohen Maß im Sinn des Ornaments gelöst. Gleichwohl aber bewahren die Figuren ihre körperliche Präsenz, Kraft und Wirkung. Insbesondere die Gorgonen und Löwen sind gewiss als bildhafter Schutz des Gefäßes vor Beschädigung und seiner Nutzer vor schädlichen Wirkungen des Weines angebracht – in demselben Sinn wie an Quellhäusern die Wasserspeier in Form eines Löwenkopfes als ‚Quellwächter‘ (*krenophylax*) bezeichnet

und auf Gräbern die Bilder der Sphinx als ‚Hunde des Hades‘ um Schutz angerufen wurden. ‚Ornamentale‘ Stilisierung nimmt den Figuren nichts von ihren ‚lebendigen‘ Wirkung.<sup>8</sup>

Insgesamt fügt sich der Schmuck des Kraters von Vix zu einem konzentrischen Konzept einer kulturellen Ordnung zusammen. Im Zentrum steht die Frau als Braut, nicht nur weil der Krater als prunkvolle Gabe einer jungen Fürstin mit ins Grab gegeben wurde, sondern allgemein, weil in den archaischen Adelsgesellschaften – in Griechenland wohl ähnlich wie im keltischen Norden – die Frau ihren konzeptionellen wie realen Ort im inneren Bereich von Haus und Herd hatte. Der äußere Ring dieser Ordnung wird von der Prozession der Krieger gebildet, die die Gemeinschaft nach außen verteidigten und auch mit ihren Ritualen den Bereich des Draußen besetzten: So zogen die Adligen von Eretria in einer großen Prozession auf 60 Wagen zum extraurbanen Heiligtum der Artemis Amarynthia. Den äußeren Rand dieses kulturell-sozialen Konzepts markieren schließlich die Gorgonen, Löwen und Schlangen: jene bedrohlichen Monster und Bestien der Wildnis, die die konzeptuelle Gegenwelt zur Lebensordnung der Menschen bildeten, von Göttern und mythischen Helden bezwungen wurden und schließlich symbolisch zum Schutz der menschlichen Kultur eingesetzt wurden. Die Bilderwelt des Kraters ist ein Kosmos im zweifachen Sinn des Schmuckes und der (Lebens-)Ordnung.<sup>9</sup>

Dekor und Repräsentation bedingen unterschiedliche Formen der Wahrnehmung. Repräsentative Bildwerke, insbesondere großformatige Standbilder, Reliefs und Gemälde sind auf Interaktion angelegt. Sie haben ihren Ort in demselben Handlungsraum wie die lebenden Akteure der menschlichen Gesellschaft, denen sie autonom und unmittelbar sichtbar gegenüber stehen. Dekor dagegen wird nicht als autonomes Gebilde, sondern als Element von Gegenständen oder Architekturen wahrgenommen, die gemäß ihren eigenen Funktionen und Gesetzen gestaltet sind. Unter dieser Vorgabe ist Dekor zunächst kein autonomes ‚Thema‘, sondern eine Qualität des geschmückten Gegenstandes. Von diesem Gegenstand wird die spezifische Sichtbarkeit des Dekors, aus der Nähe oder in der Distanz, mit größerer oder geringerer Aufmerksamkeit, mit dem Blick auf das Einzelne oder als Wahrnehmung eines allgemeinen Eindrucks, bestimmt.

Die hier kurz bezeichneten Probleme und Konflikte zwischen Figur und Ornament zeigen sich mit besonderer Schärfe im figürlichen Schmuck von Architektur.

<sup>8</sup> Zur schützenden Funktion von Löwen, Gorgonen, Sphingen siehe F. Hölscher 1972, 59–66.

<sup>9</sup> Konzentrische Struktur der griechischen Polis-Welt: T. Hölscher 2000; T. Hölscher 2015a, 21–22. Prozession mit 60 Wagen von Eretria zum Heiligtum der Artemis Amarynthia: Strabo 10, 1, 10. Wilde Randzonen (*eschatia*) und wilde Tiere/Monster: T. Hölscher 1999; Winkler-Horaček 2015, bes. 371–394.

## Vor den kanonischen Ordnungen: Der archaische Tempel von Prinias

Die Ausstattung von Architektur mit figürlichem ‚Decor‘ steht zunächst unter der grundsätzlichen Voraussetzung, dass bereits die Bauwerke als solche durch und durch nach ‚decorativen‘ Konzepten gestaltet sind: in rechteckigen oder runden Grundformen, in Proportionen von Länge, Höhe und Tiefe, auf emporhebenden Stufen, mit intentional (vielfach axial) gesetzten Türen und Fenstern, rhythmisch gesetzten Säulen, deckenden Gebälken und einem auf Ansicht gestalteten Dach. Schon die rein funktionalen Elemente erhalten eine ‚decorative‘ Form.

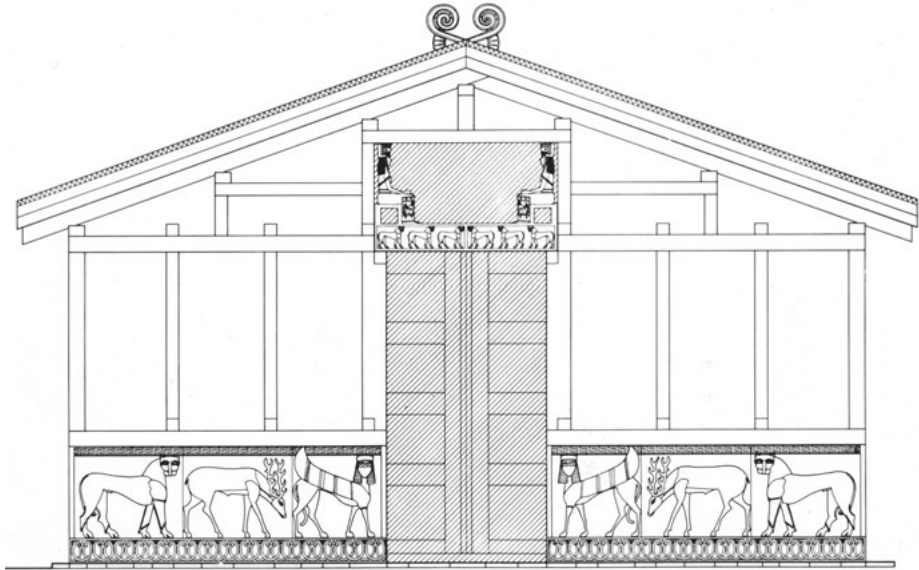
Für die Bewertung des figürlichen ‚Decors‘ griechischer und römischer Architektur ist entscheidend, dass alle Elemente der Bauwerke, die mit Figuren geschmückt werden konnten, auch ohne Figuren eingesetzt wurden und als solche eine schmückende Funktion hatten: in der dorischen Ordnung die Reihen von abwechselnden Metopen und Triglyphen, in der ionischen Ordnung die zusammenfassenden Bänder der Frieze, in verschiedenen Ordnungen die flachen dreieckigen Giebel als nobilitierende Überhöhung der Fassade. Die dekorative Wirkung dieser Elemente beruhte zunächst auf ihrer ‚leeren‘ abstrakten Form. Wenn sie zusätzlich mit Ornamenten oder figürlichen Themen in Malerei oder Relief geschmückt wurden, so war das gegenüber der abstrakten Form eine Bereicherung, aber keine essentielle Veränderung. Und in Bezug auf den Bau gab es keinen Unterschied zwischen ornamentalem und figürlichem Schmuck.<sup>10</sup>

Das früheste Beispiel eines umfangreichen, komplexen Bildschmucks ist in dem Tempel von Prinias, aus der Zeit um 630 v. Chr. erhalten (Abb. 2.3a–c). Seine Form ist ungewöhnlich: ein rechteckiges Haus, ohne Säulen, mit hohem Satteldach und großer Eingangstüre. Ebenso unkanonisch ist die Platzierung des Bildschmucks: Die kanonischen Ordnungen der Tempelarchitektur mit ihren festgelegten Orten für Bildschmuck sind hier noch nicht in Sicht. Doch schon hier werden solche Elemente des Bauwerks, die bereits als solche ‚decorative‘ Funktion haben, zusätzlich mit figürlichem Schmuck hervorgehoben: Orthostaten der Wand, Gewände der Türe, Rahmen der Lichtöffnung.<sup>11</sup>

In den Bildern ist, entsprechend dem Krater von Vix, ein Konzept einer Lebensordnung zu erkennen, das in innere und äußere ‚soziale‘ Bereiche gegliedert ist. Wie an keinem anderen griechischen Kultbau ist der figürliche Schmuck der Architektur ‚ornamental‘ eingefügt – zugleich aber wird hier in besonderem Maß deutlich, dass die Ordnung des Schmuckes eine Ordnung der Bildthemen ist.

<sup>10</sup> Zum schmückenden Charakter von Metopen-Triglyphen, Friesen und Giebeln siehe Marconi 2004.

<sup>11</sup> Zum Tempel von Prinias siehe Beyer 1976, 21–38; D’Acunto 1995, 15–55; Marinatos 2000, 67–78; T. Hölscher 2015a, 89–91.



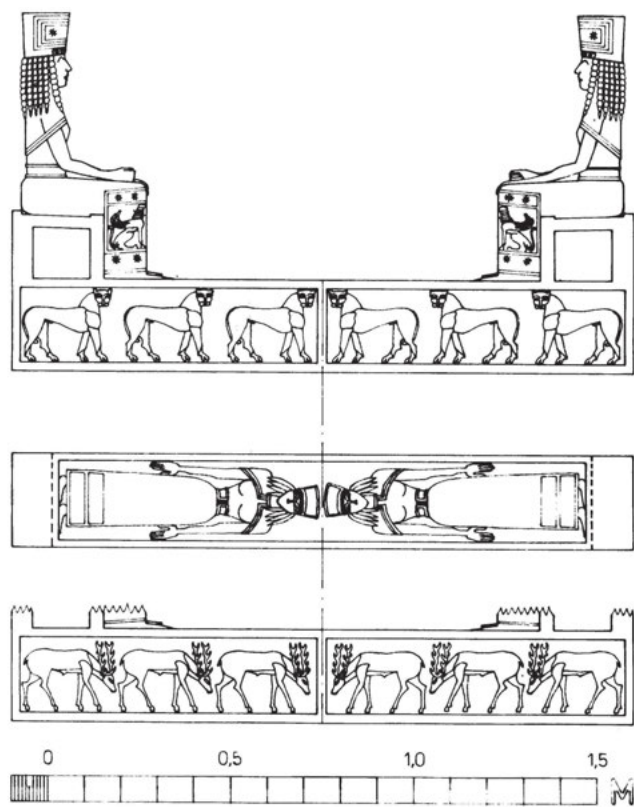
**Abb. 2.3a–c:** Archaischer Tempel (AS) von Prinias, Rekonstruktion des Bildschmucks. Um 630 v. Chr.

Im Inneren des Baues ist wohl ein Kultbild der Gottheit anzunehmen, die wohl für die Gemeinschaft von Prinias ‚poliadische‘ Bedeutung gehabt hat. Der Bildschmuck des gesamten Tempels lässt an eine weibliche Göttin denken, am ehesten Artemis. Die große Eingangstüre wird von Frauen beherrscht, die dem Haus der Gottheit zugeordnet sind, offenbar in einer Hierarchie von drei Altersstufen: nackte Mädchen stehend, bekleidete junge Frauen stehend, bekleidete Frauen thronend, jeweils in symmetrischer Verdoppelung. Sie sind zuletzt sämtlich allgemein als weibliche Gottheiten gedeutet worden, doch das ist unwahrscheinlich: Wenn dieselbe Göttin gemeint wäre, so wäre die Vervielfältigung in drei unterschiedlichen Aspekten höchst ungewöhnlich; wenn verschiedene göttliche Wesen vereinigt wären, so wäre auch eine derart differenzierte Abstufung ohne Vergleich. Tatsächlich scheinen mindestens zum Teil menschliche Wesen gemeint zu sein.<sup>12</sup>

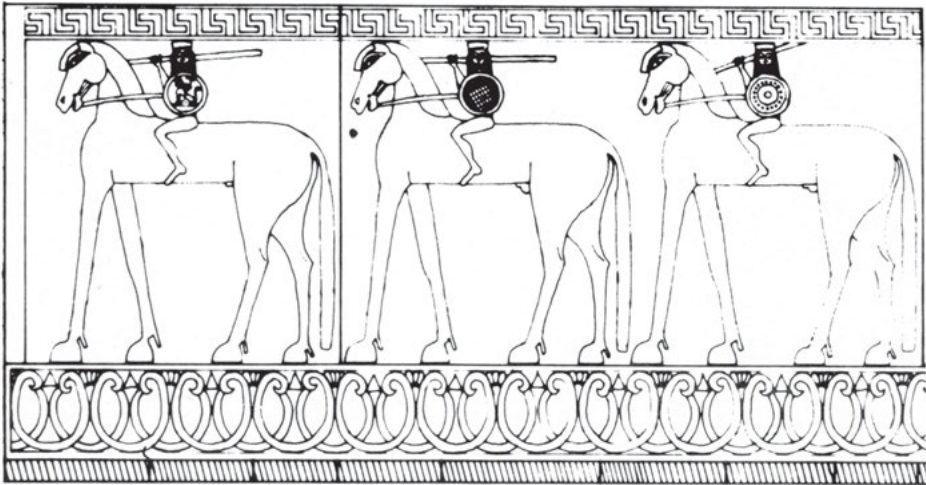
An den Innenseiten der Türpfeiler erscheinen nackte Mädchen, die offenbar das Stadium der Initiation repräsentieren. Die zahlreichen weiblichen Figuren mit nacktem Körper aus dem 8. und 7. Jahrhundert v. Chr., vor allem Statuetten und Reliefs aus Terrakotta, Bronze und anderen Materialien, sind ikonographisch zumeist nicht genauer charakterisiert; aber mit Sicherheit stellen sie nicht alle „die nackte Göttin“ dar. Das gilt insbesondere für Gruppen von zwei bis zu fünf Figuren, die zu Recht als junge Mädchen angesprochen wurden. Dabei ist nicht nur an spezielle Kultdienerinnen zu denken, sondern allgemein an die weibliche Jugend der Oberschicht. In

<sup>12</sup> Dieselbe Göttin in verschiedenen Aspekten: Marinatos 2000.

b



c



Kreta und anderen dorischen Landschaften spielte die körperliche Ausbildung junger Mädchen in athletischen Übungen, Tänzern und Schönheitswettbewerben eine große Rolle. Bei athletischen Agonen wurden die Körper z. T. entblößt; wie weit das auch bei Ritualen der Pubertät als Erweis von Gesundheit und Schönheit geschah, ist unklar. Die Statuetten und Reliefs stellen dies Körperideal in völliger Nacktheit zur Schau; in diesem Sinn wurden sie in Heiligtümern als Votive dargebracht. Ähnlich ist die Bedeutung der nackten Mädchen am Tempel von Prinias, wo sie ‚ornamental‘ in die längliche Oberfläche des Pfeilers eingepasst sind.<sup>13</sup>

Den Mädchen korrespondieren auf der Unterseite des Türsturzes zwei Kopf an Kopf angeordnete Figuren junger Frauen in reicher Kleidung, mit Schultertuch und flachem Polos auf dem Kopf. Auch sie haben enge Parallelen in rundplastischen Figuren, auf Kreta am ähnlichsten in der bekannten Statue von Auxerre. Auch hier ist die Deutung, ob Göttin oder menschliche Frau, umstritten; der Polos der Figuren von Prinias ist kein spezifisches Attribut von Göttlichkeit, sondern ein Bestandteil reicher Tracht, bei göttlichen wie menschlichen Figuren. Die Anbringung an der Unterseite des Türbalkens wäre allerdings für eine Göttin keine sehr respektable Platzierung, dagegen schließen sich die bekleideten Frauen mit den nackten Mädchen in dem Türrahmen zusammen. Offenbar stellen sie Bräute und zukünftige Mütter dar.<sup>14</sup>

Über dem Türsturz schließlich erscheinen zwei thronende Frauen, in rundplastischer Körperlichkeit, die einander zugewandt eine große Lichtöffnung rahmen. Auch sie sind mit Schultertuch und Polos ausgezeichnet. Wiederum finden sich ähnliche freistehende Figuren, auch sie mit indifferenter Ikonographie, die keine sichere Entscheidung zwischen Götterbild und Votivbildern menschlicher Frauen ermöglicht. Sie könnten die Altersstufe der würdigen Ehefrau repräsentieren, wie eine frühe Grabsstele aus Paros oder spätere archaische Votivfiguren aus dem griechischen Osten. Andererseits könnten zwei Frieze mit Tieren auf den beiden Seiten des Türrahmens unter ihren Thronen und Füßen sie als Göttinnen der Natur auszeichnen: außen wilde Panther, innen Hirsche.<sup>15</sup>

Standbilder von Koren sind kürzlich für das mittlere 6. Jahrhundert v. Chr. als rahmende Figuren am Nordeingang des Heraions von Samos wahrscheinlich gemacht worden. Am Schatzhaus von Siphnos in Delphi wird der Eingang von reich gekleideten Karyatiden eingefasst. Noch im 3. Jahrhundert wurden in Priene Standbilder von Priesterinnen vor dem Eingang des Heiligtums der Demeter aufgestellt. Das thematische Spektrum solcher dem Kult zugeordneter weiblicher Figuren bedarf weite-

<sup>13</sup> Das gesamte Material zu nackten weiblichen Figuren in der archaischen griechischen Kunst (außer den Reliefs von Prinias) bei Böhm 1990. Athletische Ausbildung von Mädchen: Arrigoni 1985; Stewart 1997, 29–34 und 108–129. Schönheitswettbewerbe: Calame 1977, 223–224, 345 und 447; Kreilinger 2007, 186–189.

<sup>14</sup> Stehende bekleidete Frauenfiguren aus Kreta: Bol 2002, 83–90, Abb. 160 und 162 (G. Kaminski).

<sup>15</sup> Sitzende Frauenfiguren aus Kreta: Bol 2002, 92–95, Abb. 167–169 (G. Kaminski). Stele Paros: Barlou 2014, 17, Taf. 1.

rer Untersuchungen. Jedenfalls sind die Mädchen und Frauen, die am Tempel von Prinias den Eingang rahmen, offenbar als empfangende Teilnehmerinnen des Kultes gemeint. Sie sind hier in extremem Maß ‚ornamental‘ in die Architektur eingepasst. Gleichwohl kommt ihnen offenbar eine analoge lebendige Wirksamkeit zu wie den rundplastischen Stützfiguren in Delphi und den frei stehenden Standbildern in Samos(?) und Priene.<sup>16</sup>

An der Außenseite des Baues dagegen waren die Orthostaten der Wände mit Bildern der wilden Randzonen geschmückt, die die konzeptuelle Ordnung der frühen ‚städtischen‘ Gemeinschaften umgaben: an der Frontseite bedrohliche Panther, mächtige Hirsche und monströse Sphingen, das ganze Spektrum der animalischen Antipoden zur menschlichen Lebenskultur; und von beiden Langseiten junge Männer mit Schild und Speer auf hochbeinigen Pferden heranreitend: die Blüte der vornehmen Familien, die auf der Jagd und im heldenhaften Krieg für die Lebensordnung der Gemeinschaft kämpften.

Der Tempel von Prinias wird durch seinen figürlichen Schmuck zu einem Bau von höchstem kulturell-religiösen ‚Wert‘, ein *agalma* für die Gottheit. Auch hier ist die Ausstattung mit Bildwerken ein Kosmos im zweifachen Sinn: kostbarer Dekor und konzeptuelle Ordnung.

Als Dekor stellen die Bildwerke eine Pretiosierung im Sinne der Steigerung von kulturellem Wert dar. Sie sind in besonders starkem Maß auf die Architektur als Träger der Bilder bezogen. Die dadurch entstehende Heteronomie zeigt sich in zweifacher Weise. Zum einen sind die Gestalten der Figuren nicht nur durch ihre eigene Körperlichkeit, sondern sehr stark auch durch ihren Ort im Gefüge der Architektur und ihrer symmetrischen Grundstruktur bestimmt: relativ hohe Orthostatenfriese der Wände, schmale Laibungen der Türe, Rahmung der Lichtöffnung. Die Formate, Proportionen und Haltungen der Figuren sind rigoros den architektonischen Orten angepasst; an der Unterseite des Türsturzes sind die Frauen sogar antithetisch Kopf gegen Kopf gestellt. Zum anderen bietet die Ordnung der Bilder sich dem Blick nicht in einfacher Ansicht dar: An den Türpfeilern wie auch an der Unter- und Innenseite des Türsturzes sind die Reliefs nur mit Mühe wahrzunehmen. Schmuck, als Steigerung von ‚Wert‘, setzt zwar Sichtbarkeit voraus, besitzt aber als kulturelle Kategorie eine gewisse Autonomie, die über die möglichst deutliche Ansichtigkeit hinausreicht.

Als konzeptuelle Ordnung stellen die Bilder eine soziale und kulturelle ‚Welt‘ der Polis dar: mit den jungen Männern in ritterlicher *aretē*, den Frauen in den Altersstufen der Initiation und der Vorsteherin des Oikos, vielleicht weiblichen Gottheiten, und jedenfalls der Gegenwelt der wilden Tiere. Diese Welt ist an dem Tempelbau so geordnet, dass Außen und Innen die sozialen Räume der Geschlechter, Oben und Unten die Hierarchie der weiblichen Wesen zur Anschauung bringen.

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<sup>16</sup> Heraion, Samos: Duplouy 2006, 197–203. Schatzhaus der Siphnier, Delphi: Schmidt 1982, 72–78. Demeter-Heiligtum, Priene: Eule 2001, 121.

Man kann sich vorstellen, dass vor und in dem Tempel die religiösen Rituale der städtischen Gemeinschaft in visuell gestalteter Form vollzogen wurden. Die Ordnungen der Bilder und der realen Gesellschaft ergänzten sich wechselseitig.

## Kanonischer Bauschmuck: Der klassische Tempel des Zeus in Olympia

Der Zeus-Tempel von Olympia ist ein fortgeschrittenes Beispiel einer kanonischen Bauordnung mit komplexem Bildschmuck. Vorausgegangen waren dorische Tempel in Unteritalien und Sizilien, ebenso ionische und dorische Schatzhäuser in Delphi und Olympia. Der Zeus-Tempel macht besonders eklatant eine Eigenschaft aller archaischen und klassischen griechischen Bauskulptur deutlich: ihre extrem schlechte Sichtbarkeit.<sup>17</sup>

Bereits früher wurde hervorgehoben, dass die Platzierung von figürlichem Schmuck an griechischen Sakralbauten denkbar ungünstig für die Wahrnehmung durch die Betrachter ist. Es ist, zumindest in diesem Zusammenhang, wenig sinnvoll, darüber zu streiten, wie viel antike Betrachter in den figürlich gestalteten Metopen, Friesen, Giebeln und Akroteren haben sehen können. Entscheidend ist, dass die Platzierung dieser Bildträger zweifellos nicht mit dem Ziel bestmöglicher Sichtbarkeit festgesetzt wurde: Sie schmücken Gebälk und Dach in großer Höhe, bieten sich dem Blick nur in großer Distanz, und bei verringerter Distanz in zunehmend steilem Winkel dar.<sup>18</sup>

Durchweg handelt es sich um architektonische Elemente, die *nicht* zum tektonischen Gerüst des Bauwerks gehören: Die Metopen als Leerstellen zwischen den ‚konstruktiven‘ Triglyphen, die Frieze als Schmuckband über dem tragenden Architrav, die Giebel als leere Dreiecke zwischen Gebälk und Dach, die Akrotere als Aufsätze über dem Dach. Als nicht-konstruktive Elemente haben sie im Kontext der Architektur zunächst ornamentale Wirkung: die Metopen als serieller Rapport, die Frieze als Band, die Giebel als symmetrische Bekrönung, die Akrotere als Akzente über First und Ecken. Aufgrund dieser ornamentalen Grundfunktion können sie – im Gegensatz zu den konstruktiven Elementen der Stufen, Wände, Säulen und Gebälke – mit zusätzlichen Ornamenten geschmückt werden: vielfach in Malerei, und darum nicht mehr erhalten.

<sup>17</sup> Zu dem Skulpturenschmuck des Zeus-Tempels von Olympia siehe bes.: Herrmann 1987; Simon 1968; Kyrieleis 2012/2013. Die Einwände von Patay-Horváth 2007 gegen die Rekonstruktion des Ostgiebels und seine Deutung durch Pausanias überzeugen mich nicht, siehe Kyrieleis 2012/2013, 67 Anm. 37. Dazu zuletzt Patay-Horváth 2015, 2–6, 94–97 und 188–200; dagegen T. Hölscher in Patay-Horváth 2015, 90–93.

<sup>18</sup> Problematische Sichtbarkeit: T. Hölscher 2009. Entsprechend zum Parthenon siehe Marconi 2009.



Wenn seit dem 6. Jahrhundert v. Chr. Metopen, Frieze, Giebel und Akrotere auch in Form von figürlichen Bildern geschmückt wurden, so war dabei offenbar nicht primär die Absicht maßgebend, bildliche ‚Botschaften‘ in möglichst zugänglicher Ansicht für die Betrachter zu präsentieren, sondern vorgegebene ‚ornamentale‘ Felder mit einem besonders reichen und bedeutungsvollen Schmuck zu füllen. Dafür waren aber diese Felder auch in ihren Formaten schlecht geeignet: Die langen Serien quadratischer Metopen eigneten sich nur für eng begrenzte Kompositionen von wenigen Figuren; komplexere Themen konnten nur aus solchen immer gleichen Teil-Bildern zusammengesetzt werden. Die langen und schmalen Formate der Frieze ließen fast nur Themen von grundsätzlich sequentieller Form zu. Die Giebel mit ihren flachen dreieckigen Rahmen zwangen zu zentralen Kompositionen mit höchst artifiziellen Bewegungen und Haltungen zu den Ecken hin. Die Akrotere setzten mit ihrer Funktion und Platzierung am Bau der Wahl der Themen enge Grenzen.

Die Macht der ‚ornamentalen‘ Vorgaben ist am Zeus-Tempel von Olympia besonders deutlich zu erkennen. In beiden Giebeln wie in den beiden Reihen von Metopen werden die mythischen Vorgänge in einer Form vor Augen geführt, die in hohem Maß von den strukturellen Vorgaben der Architektur geprägt ist und die figürliche Repräsentation in einer Form der ornamentalen Lebendigkeit entfaltet.

Der Ostgiebel mit der Konstellation der Protagonisten Oinomaos und Pelops vor der Wettfahrt um die Herrschaft in Olympia ist in seiner symmetrischen Grundstruktur oft analysiert worden (Abb. 2.4). Die Rekonstruktion der Komposition ist zuletzt von Helmut Kyrieleis noch einmal mit guten Gründen im Sinne von Reinhard Kekulé von Stradonitz, Hans-Volkmar Herrmann und Erika Simon bestätigt worden; doch die in den erhaltenen Figuren inhärente Kraft der formalen Grundprinzipien zeigt sich darin, dass auch andere Rekonstruktionen durchweg zu Kompositionen von dynamisch variierter Symmetrie führen. Die antithetische Ordnung der Gestalten ist von großer Prägnanz: Zeus als Mittelachse, gerahmt von den beiden Paaren König/Königin und Freier/Braut, sodann die beiden Gespanne, anschließend die beiden Paare von hockendem Sehern und je einer weiteren kauernenden Gestalt, in den Zwickeln die gelagerten Flussgötter. Um dieser Symmetrie willen wird die mythische Situation in einer Form geschildert, die in verschiedener Hinsicht nicht von dem ‚realen‘ Vorgang geprägt ist. Um nur wenige Beispiele zu nennen: Die antithetische Stellung der Gespanne lässt nichts davon erkennen, dass beide in dieselbe Richtung abfahren werden; der Pferdeknecht vor dem Gespann des Pelops wird von einer Dienerin der Sterope ausgeglichen, die unmittelbar vor den Pferden des Oinomaos einen wenig natürlichen Platz hat; das Lagern der Flussgötter entspricht nicht der üblichen Ikonographie von Flussgöttern in dieser Zeit, sondern ist von der Form des Giebels diktiert.

Die Volumina und Silhouetten dieser Komposition bilden ein abstraktes Muster: im Zentrum fünf senkrecht aufstrebende Körper, dann die waagerechten Trapeze der Gespanne, in den Zwickeln die gestauchten Leiber der hockenden Figuren, und in den Zwickeln die Liegenden mit ihren fließenden Gestalten. Daraus ergibt sich eine

dekorative Struktur, die im Prinzip den Rankenornamenten von kleineren Giebeln entspricht. Vergleichbar sind etwa die Kompositionen in den Giebeln der kleineren Sarkophage aus dem Grab des Alexandersarkophags von Sidon (Abb. 2.5): Dort steht im Zentrum eine große Blüte, vertikal aufgerichtet und frontal zum Betrachter gewendet, wie die fünf zentralen Figuren in Olympia. Nach den Seiten entwickeln sich die Kompositionen grundsätzlich horizontal: die Ranken zunächst abwärts eingerollt, entsprechend den Gespannen mit gesenkten Schweifen; dann aufwärts zurückgerollt, entsprechend links dem Lenker, rechts dem ersten Seher; dann in die Zwickel auseinanderfließend, wie die Flussgötter.<sup>19</sup>

Dies Prinzip der antithetischen Symmetrie ist allerdings in der Komposition von Olympia in komplexer Weise vielfältig aufgebrochen. Helmut Kyrieleis hat in einer eindringlichen Studie die komplexe Körper- und Gebärdensprache des Giebels untersucht und gezeigt, in welchem Maß sie die gesamte Auffassung des ‚realen‘ Mythos prägt. Zeus wendet und öffnet sich zu seiner rechten Seite, als Zeichen seiner Zustimmung zu Pelops‘ Sieg. Die beiden Paare sind durch unterschiedliche Tracht als älteres Königspaar und heldenhaftes Brautpaar charakterisiert. In ihrer Haltung kommen die verschiedenen psychischen Zustände zum Ausdruck: Oinomaos erscheint in statischer Pose der herrscherlichen Arroganz, die rechte Hand abwartend in die Hüfte gestützt, Sterope in energieloser Haltung, mit sich verschließenden Gebärden der Arme, die die Vorahnung des Unglücks anzeigen, beide von Zeus abgewandt und dem Verderben entgegenblickend. Ihnen gegenüber stehen Pelops mit dem beweglichen Körper des jungen Helden, den Kopf in Bescheidenheit und Selbstkontrolle gesenkt, und Hippodameia in der stattlichen Erscheinung als glanzvolle Braut, mit Gebärden der sich öffnenden Anmut, beide in liebender Zuneigung einander zugewandt. Anschließend bilden die beiden Gespanne zwei gleich gewichtige Blöcke, doch Pelops‘ Gespann wird von zwei Dienern für den baldigen Start vorbereitet, das später startende Gespann des Oinomaos ist noch ohne Personal. Sehr unterschiedlich sind sodann die Seher, nach alter olympischer Tradition auf dem Boden sitzend, die die unterschiedliche Zukunft der Protagonisten antizipieren: rechts ein Greis, Amythaon oder Klytios, der mit bedrückter Miene und einer Gebärde der Sorge das Unglück des Königs voraussieht; daneben ein jüngerer, wohl Melampous, in passiver Haltung und mit gesenkt abgewandtem Kopf; links dagegen Iamos, in kräftiger Männlichkeit, der mit erhobenem Kopf zuversichtlich zu Zeus und den von ihm beschützten Brautleuten Pelops und Hippodameia schaut. Die Flussgötter sind in ihren Körpern entsprechend ihrem natürlichen Charakter differenziert: links der ältere Alphaios als ruhiger kraftvoller Strom, rechts der jüngere Kladeos als ungestüm vorandrängender Bach.

<sup>19</sup> Sarkophage Sidon: Möbius 1929, Taf. 25a–b; Graeve 1970, Taf. 2.2 und 3.1–2. Holzsarkophage Südrussland: Watzinger 1905, Abb. 65–66, Taf. I. Siehe auch die Bekrönungen von attischen Grabreliefs: Möbius 1929, Taf. 40.2. Ferner die goldene Truhe aus Vergina: siehe oben, Anm. 4.

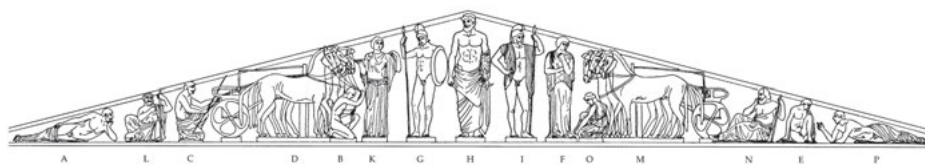
Doch auch in diesen Abweichungen von der strengen Symmetrie ergeben sich ornamentale Muster. Die Wendung des Zeus nach seiner rechten Seite wird von Pelops und Hippodameia mit einer Zusammenführung der Kopfwendungen aufgefangen; auf der Gegenseite ergeben die gleichermaßen abgewandten Köpfe von Oinomaos und Sterope ein gedehntes Ausgreifen. Bei dem jungen Paar ist der Mann stärker gebeugt, die Frau stärker aufgerichtet, bei dem Königspaar ist es umgekehrt. Das Gespann des Pelops hat von den Köpfen der Pferde bis zu dem Diener hinter dem Wagen eine klar begrenzte Erstreckung; bei dem Gespann des Oinomaos ist diese Strecke wegen des Fehlens des Lenkers gedehnter, bis zu dem hockenden Seher. Umgekehrt sind die Figuren in der linken Ecke beide stärker nach der Mitte gerichtet, in der rechten Ecke deutlich einander zugewendet.

Offensichtlich sind solche Differenzierungen von Zu- und Abwendung, Zusammenführung und Dehnung, *systolê* und *diastolê*, sehr bewusst als Formen dynamischer Abweichung von der Symmetrie eingeführt. Ganz entsprechende Prinzipien sind von Polyklet in der Gestaltung der Haare umgesetzt worden (Abb. 2.6): Beim Doryphoros weichen die Zangen und Gabeln der Locken über der Stirn ebenfalls von der axialen Symmetrie in einem dynamischen Wechselspiel von Zusammenführung und Dehnung ab.<sup>20</sup>

Dabei ist entscheidend, dass im Ostgiebel von Olympia alle ‚ornamentalen‘ Prinzipien zugleich inhaltliche Aussagen sind. Das gilt zum einen für die symmetrische Grundstruktur der Komposition. Sie zeigt, dass mit dem Königspaar und dem Brautpaar zwei ethische ‚Welten‘ gegeneinander stehen. Ebenso aber gilt es für die dynamischen Abweichungen von der Symmetrie. Die Wendung des Zeus zu Pelops und Hippodameia zeigt an, dass er ihnen Zustimmung und Beistand gewährt. Die gegenseitige Zuwendung der Brautleute führt ihre liebende Zusammengehörigkeit vor Augen. Die Abwendung des Herrscherpaares macht ihre Distanz zu Zeus und ihren Blick auf das kommende Unglück deutlich. Die Seher bringen in ihren Haltungen der Zu- und Abwendung, des Auf- und Niederblickens die Vision der unterschiedlichen Schicksale zum Ausdruck. Die Flussgötter demonstrieren in den Bewegungen ihrer Körper verschiedene Stadien von Aufmerksamkeit und Erregung. In den formalen Prinzipien der Zusammenführung und Dehnung, *systolê* und *diastolê*, kommen ethische und psychische Kräfte zum Ausdruck.

Das wirft auch ein Licht auf die scheinbar rein ornamentalen Gebilde, die hier mit der Komposition des Giebels verglichen worden sind. Auch die vegetabilen Schmuckmotive und die Locken des Doryphoros sind nicht rein formale ‚Zier‘, sondern bringen Kräfte und Prinzipien des ‚Lebens‘ zur Entfaltung. Nikolaus Himmelmann hat gezeigt, dass dem griechischen Ornament seit der Frühzeit ‚organische‘ Kräfte eigen sind, und Hans von Steuben hat dargelegt, dass die Lockenformen des Doryphoros dem gesamten kontrapostischen Körperkonzept Polyklets als eines dynamischen Zusam-

<sup>20</sup> Steuben 1979, 11–12.



**Abb. 2.4:** Ostgiebel des Zeus-Tempels von Olympia, Rekonstruktion. Um 460 v. Chr.

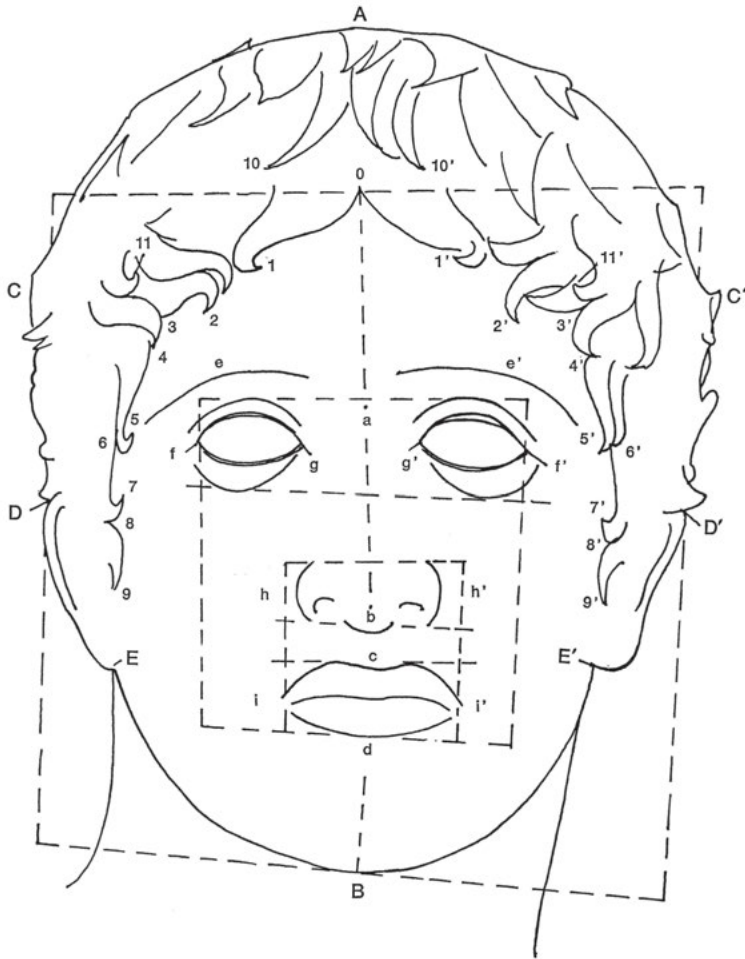


**Abb. 2.5:** Sarkophag aus dem Grab des Alexander-Sarkophags in Sidon, um 320 v. Chr. Istanbul, Arkeoloji Müzesi.

menspiels von antithetischen Kräften den Anspannung und Entspannung, der Kontraktion und Dehnung entsprechen. Ornamente und Lebewesen gehören derselben Welt konzeptueller Bilder an.<sup>21</sup>

Am Tempel von Olympia ist die Komposition des Giebels nicht nur stark von der Vorgabe des flachen Dreiecks konditioniert. Wie Peter Grunauer gezeigt hat, nimmt sie auch Bezug auf die gesamte architektonische Struktur des Baues, insbesondere auf die Säulen sowie die Triglyphen und Metopen des Gebälks. Die zentrale Figur des Zeus erhebt sich über der mittleren Triglyphe; zu seinen Seiten entsprechen die Männer und Frauen mit den kauern den Dienern den anschließenden Paaren von Metope und Triglyphe. Die beiden Gespanne haben ebenfalls die Ausdehnung einer

<sup>21</sup> Himmelfmann 1968; Steuben 1979, 11–12.



**Abb. 2.6:** Doryphoros des Polyklet, Schema der Stirnlocken (nach von Steuben 1973), um 440 v. Chr.

Folge von Metope und Triglyphe. Danach nehmen die drei kauernenden, sitzenden und liegenden Figuren den Raum über je einer bzw. zweier Metopen oder Triglyphen ein. Die Figuren der Szene im Giebel entfalten ihre Lebendigkeit in einem pointierten Bezug auf die (annähernd) geometrische Serialität der Architektur.<sup>22</sup>

Noch überraschender ist, dass Peter Grunauer entsprechende Prinzipien sogar für den Westgiebel aufgezeigt hat: Auch dort sind die stark bewegten Figuren der Kentauiromachie, die sich auf den ersten Blick in ihren wogenden Bewegungen jeder Tektonik zu entziehen scheinen, gleichwohl streng auf den Rhythmus der Architek-

<sup>22</sup> Grunauer 1974, 1–51; siehe dazu Ridgway 1999, 80–81.

tur bezogen. Nicht nur bildet Apollon mit den symmetrisch von ihm ausgehenden Helden Theseus und Peirithoos eine axiale Trias des göttlichen Rechts über der mittleren Triglyphe mit den rahmenden Metopen. Die Kampfgruppen mit ihren markanten Zäsuren nehmen nach beiden Seiten hin jeweils den Raum von zwei, einer, drei und wieder zwei Einheiten von Triglyphen und Metopen ein. Der Bezug wird vielfach noch dadurch betont, dass die Gruppen der Kämpfenden teils zu Körpermassen zusammengeballt sind, teils markante Lücken zwischen sich lassen, die dem Rhythmus der Triglyphen und Metopen entsprechen. Die Spannung zwischen der Tektonik der Architektur und der explosiven Bewegung der Figuren ist damit auf die Spitze getrieben.

Entsprechende Prinzipien der Komposition sind von der Forschung bekanntlich an den Metopen mit den Taten des Herakles aufgezeigt worden. Das muss nicht wiederholt werden. Nur zwei grundsätzliche Phänomene sind hervorzuheben.

Die drei mythischen Themen des Tempels schließen sich zu einer Triade von heroischem Ruhm zusammen. Der Ostgiebel führt mit dem bevorstehenden Sieg des Pelops und der Hippodameia die Gründung des Heiligtums unter dem Schutz und zugleich zu Ehren des höchsten Gottes Zeus vor Augen. Der Westgiebel stellt die Verteidigung der von den Göttern begründeten ethischen Ordnung einer kollektiven Lebensgemeinschaft in der Kooperation zweier Protagonisten dar. Dagegen schildern die Metopen die Leistungen des einzigartigen Herakles als Exempel des individuellen Einsatzes für die menschliche Kultur. Es ist zugleich eine Triade von geographischer Bedeutung: Pelops als lokaler Heros, Herakles als Protagonist der Peloponnes, Theseus und Peirithoos als Exponenten aller Griechen, von Athen bis Thessalien. Als komplementäre Triade bilden die drei Mythen eine ‚Welt‘ archetypischer ethischer und sozialer Konzepte. Was Helmut Kyrieleis über den Ostgiebel schreibt, kann auf den gesamten Bildschmuck des Tempels ausgeweitet werden: Er stellt „... ein komplexes, von überzeitlichen Sinnbezügen durchwaltetes Gesamtbild der sakralen Welt Olympias“ vor Augen.<sup>23</sup> ‚Kosmos‘ als Schmuck und als konzeptuelle ‚Ordnung‘ fallen in eins.

An dem Tempel sind die drei Themen so angebracht, dass die Giebel an Front und Rückseite einander antithetisch gegenüber stehen, während die Metopen eine Klammer zwischen Vorder- und Rückseite darstellen. Dabei ist überraschend wenig dafür gesorgt worden, dass dies Konzept von den Besuchern des Heiligtums visuell wahrgenommen wurde. Nicht nur ist die Sichtbarkeit der figürlichen Bilder durch die allgemeine Anbringung in großer Höhe stark beeinträchtigt, sondern für die Reliefs der Metopen ist nicht einmal der Platz an den Außenfronten, sondern innerhalb der Säulenstellung hoch über den Zugängen zum Pronaos und zum Opisthodom gewählt: wo sie nur aus sehr steilem Winkel und im Schatten der Umgangshalle zu sehen waren. Weiter kam erschwerend hinzu, dass die entscheidenden Rituale und

<sup>23</sup> Kyrieleis 2012/2013, 52–84, Zitat S. 79.

Vorgänge im Heiligtum sich vor der Front des Tempels abspielten: Hier führte der Prozessionsweg vorbei, und hier fand die abschließende Ehrung der Sieger statt. An den Seiten des Tempels führten Wege entlang, die von geweihten Bildwerken gesäumt waren, also auch begangen wurden, an der Rückseite befand sich vor allem der wilde Olivenbaum, von dem die Zweige für die Kränze der Sieger geschnitten wurden. An diesem Ritual werden wenige Besucher teilgenommen haben, und auch sonst wurde man nicht nachdrücklich zum Betrachten der Rückseite des Bauwerks und der Metopen über dem Opisthodom angehalten. Das heißt, dass der Schmuck des Tempels durch Bildwerke, im Sinn eines zugleich ästhetischen und inhaltlichen ‚Kosmos‘, eine gewisse Autonomie im Verhältnis zu den Betrachtern besaß: Der Bau war ein Sinn-volles Gebilde, das sich nicht für die aktuelle, sondern für eine potentielle Wahrnehmung präsentierte.<sup>24</sup>

## Der Weg zum Reliefbild: Die Ara Pacis in Rom

Die ‚ornamentale‘ Funktion des traditionellen Reliefschmucks griechischer Architektur wurde offenbar seit hellenistischer Zeit wegen der eingeschränkten Sichtbarkeit zunehmend als Problem empfunden. Daraus wurden schon in der hellenistischen, dann vor allem in der römischen Architektur zwei gegensätzliche, aber sich ergänzende Folgerungen gezogen.<sup>25</sup>

Die traditionellen Stellen für Reliefschmuck, Metopen und Frieze, wurden zunehmend entweder glatt und leer gelassen oder mit einfachen, leicht erkennbaren und inhaltlich wenig anspruchsvollen Motiven gefüllt. Insbesondere Grabbauten wurden mit Reihen von Metopen ausgestattet, die mit Rosetten, Phialen, Bukranien und anderen Ornamenten geschmückt wurden, oft in gleichförmigen Serien oder abwechselndem Rapport. Für Frieze an öffentlichen Gebäuden und Grabbauten wurden vor allem Serien von Girlanden, daneben variable Reihen von Opferinstrumenten, Waffen, Rüstungsstücken und schließlich vielfältige vegetabile Ranken gewählt.<sup>26</sup>

Eine entgegengesetzte, aber auf dasselbe Problem reagierende Konsequenz führte dahin, Reliefs aus ihrer traditionellen Einbindung in die Architektur zu lösen und sie frei auf Wände zu setzen, wo geeignete Formate für komplexe Bildthemen und eine Platzierung in Sichthöhe der Betrachter möglich waren. Vorbilder dafür konnten in der großen Malerei gefunden werden: Schon im 7. Jahrhundert v. Chr. wurden an den Tempeln von Isthmia und Kalapodi die Außenwände der Cella mit großen Fresko-

<sup>24</sup> Wege im Heiligtum von Olympia: T. Hölscher 2002, 331–345.

<sup>25</sup> Zum Folgenden siehe vorläufig T. Hölscher 2009, 63–66. Das Phänomen bedarf weiterer Untersuchungen.

<sup>26</sup> Honroth 1971; Hesberg 1981, 201–245; Schörner 1995; Polito 1998; Grüßinger 2001; Maschek 2012.

Malereien geschmückt; daneben gab es in geschützten Innenräumen großformatige Tafelgemälde, die im 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr. im Kreis von Polygnot und Mikon zu einer ersten Blüte geführt wurden. Entscheidend ist, dass dieser gemalte Bildschmuck nicht in tektonisch vorbestimmte ‚Schmuck-Zonen‘ eingefügt, sondern in freier Verfügung auf den Wänden platziert wurde.<sup>27</sup>

In diesem Sinn wurden dann seit dem frühen Hellenismus zunehmend wandartige Sockel und Wände mit Reliefs ausgestattet. Marksteine dieser Entwicklung sind das Neorion von Delos, aus dem frühen 3. Jahrhundert v. Chr., mit einem langen monumentalen Fries von Tritonen und Nereiden am Sockel des geweihten Kriegsschiffes von Demetrios Poliorketes; dann der große Altar von Pergamon, mit dem Gigantenfries außen am Sockel unter den Hallen und dem Telephos-Fries im Inneren in den Hallen des Hofes umlaufend; ebenfalls in Pergamon das Propylon zum Heiligtum der Athena, wo die Balustraden im Obergeschoss mit Reliefzonen geschmückt waren, darunter einer figurenreichen Darstellung des Baues des Troianischen Pferdes. Schließlich wurden in Rom seit dem späteren 2. Jahrhundert v. Chr. Grabbauten mit großen Relieftafeln an den Außenwänden geschmückt: teils mit einfachen emblematischen Motiven, wie das Grab des Konsuls Sergius Sulpicius Galba mit den 12 *fasces* seines Konsulats, teils mit komplexen Kompositionen, wie die Grabexedra eines Feldherrn, wahrscheinlich Publius Ventidius Bassus, mit der Darstellung einer Schlacht und verschiedenen allegorischen Figuren. Gleichzeitig wurde seit dem späteren 2. Jahrhundert die Gattung der klassizistischen Schmuckreliefs entwickelt, die zum Dekor vornehmer Wohnsitze in die Wände von repräsentativen Räumen eingelassen wurden. Aus solchen Wurzeln entstanden verschiedene Formen des ‚Reliefbildes‘, das als anspruchsvolle Art des Dekors in der öffentlichen und privaten Architektur des Römischen Reiches eingesetzt wurde.<sup>28</sup>

Das erste erhaltene Denkmal, das diese Möglichkeiten des Reliefschmuckes voll nutzt, ist die Ara Pacis (Abb. 2.7). Das komplexe Geflecht von ornamentalen und figurativen Motiven dieses Bauwerks ist oft genug analysiert worden: Hier sollen nur wenige Phänomene benannt werden, die einerseits die große neue Freiheit ‚repräsentativer‘ Reliefbilder betreffen, andererseits gleichwohl deren heteronome Prägung durch ihre ‚decorative‘ Einbindung hervorheben.<sup>29</sup>

Die Umfassungswand ist in einer bisher nicht bekannten Weise mit großformatigen Reliefbildern bedeckt. Die Reliefplatten zu Seiten der Eingänge an der Vorder- und Rückseite bieten einen Bildraum von völlig neuen Dimensionen für die komple-

<sup>27</sup> Zu griechischen Wand- und Tafelgemälden siehe Moreno 1987; Rouveret 1989; Scheibler 1994, bes. 14–35.

<sup>28</sup> Neorion, Delos: Webb 1996, 134–136. Grabbau des Ser. Sulpicius Galba: Schäfer 1989, 363, A 1. Grabexedra des P. Ventidius Bassus: Sydow 1974. Schmuckreliefs: Froning 1981. Zu Reliefbildern siehe auch in diesem Band den Beitrag von Reinhardt.

<sup>29</sup> Zur Ara Pacis siehe immer noch: Simon 1967 und La Rocca 1983. Neuerdings: Rossini 2006; Mla-sowski 2010; Simon 2010.





**Abb. 2.7:** Ara Pacis Rom, Ostseite, linke Hälfte, 13–9 v. Chr.

zen Szenen der Mythen von Aeneas und den Zwillingen und der Allegorien von Tellus und Roma. Selbst die großen Frieze der Langseiten mit der zweifachen Prozession der staatlichen Würdenträger und der kaiserlichen Familie sind über das Format der traditionellen Friesbänder hinaus zu monumentalen Reliefbildern gesteigert.

Gleichwohl entfalten sich die Szenen nicht als ‚freie‘ Konstellationen von Figuren und Handlungen. Die Bilder der Rückseite sind jeweils als stark hierarchische Kompositionen angelegt, mit einer Hauptfigur und zwei rahmenden Seitenfiguren in

dynamisch variierender Responsion: auf der linken Seite Italia, nach rechts sitzend, mit den komplementären Aurae des Süß- und des Meereswassers, die die Szene links zur Ecke hin abschließen, rechts zum Eingang hin stärker öffnen; auf der Gegenseite Roma, zu ihren Seiten die Genien des Senats und des Volkes. Die komplementäre Symmetrie *beider* Reliefs wird in der antithetischen Richtung des Sitzens der beiden Hauptfiguren deutlich: ein ‚ornamentales‘ Prinzip, das in der sehr summarischen Wiedergabe des Baues auf Sesterzen Neros besonders hervorgehoben ist.<sup>30</sup>

Die dynamische variierende Symmetrie der Figurenszene wird in den Relieffeldern darunter von reichen Rankenkompositionen getragen, die eine sehr viel strengere Symmetrie entfalten. Am klarsten sind die Responsionen auf der Seite des Tellus-Reliefs zu erkennen: Aus einem Akanthuskelch, der in seiner Ausladung etwa der sitzenden Göttin darüber entspricht, steigt ein senkrechter Stängel auf, der auch für die Szene darüber die ideale Mittelachse angibt; daneben entfalten sich die vegetabilen Voluten nach den Seiten, gipfelnd in zwei Schwänen und zwei rahmenden Palmetten, die den Zäsuren der figürlichen Komposition darüber entsprechen. Die strenge axiale Symmetrie des Rankenfeldes und die dynamisch variierende Symmetrie der Figurenszene stehen zueinander in einem komplementären Verhältnis der ornamentalen Gliederung.<sup>31</sup>

Die Prozession auf dem Südfries gibt bekanntlich die Supplicatio zur Rückkehr des Augustus aus Gallien und Spanien 13 v. Chr. in einer idealen Besetzung wieder, unter Einschluss von Drusus, der zu dieser Zeit in Germanien Krieg führte. Sie ist so gegliedert, dass die beiden Hauptfiguren, Augustus und Agrippa, jeweils im gleichen Abstand von der Mittelachse, drei konstitutive Abschnitte markieren: Vor dem Kaiser dominieren die Lictoren als Personal seiner politischen Machtstellung, in der Mitte treten die Flamines als oberste religiöse Würdenträger auf, hinter Agrippa folgt die kaiserliche Familie. In der Antike müssen die drei Gruppen zusätzlich durch die ursprüngliche Bemalung der Gewänder gegeneinander abgesetzt gewesen sein. An den Scharnierstellen steht Augustus als Referenzfigur für die Lictoren im ersten Abschnitt und als Beginn der folgenden Priesterschaft, Agrippa als Endpunkt der Priester und als Beginn der kaiserlichen Familie. Weiterhin sind die beiden Protagonisten dadurch herausgehoben, dass sie von Personen in drei – statt der üblichen zwei – Reliefschichten umgeben werden.

Auch hier kommt die Ambivalenz von Repräsentation und Dekor zur Geltung. Einerseits ist die gesamte Ausrichtung des Zuges nach links ‚autonom‘ vom Thema diktiert, die Reihenfolge der teilnehmenden Gruppen ist an der Realität des Rituals orientiert, die Zu- und Abwendung der Teilnehmer verleiht dem Ritual lebendige

<sup>30</sup> Sesterze Neros: Simon 2010, Abb. 6; La Rocca 1983, Abb. S. 12.

<sup>31</sup> Die Rankenfelder der Ara Pacis sind in neuerer Zeit Gegenstand weitreichender Ausdeutungen mit Referenz auf die figürlichen Friese darüber geworden: Castriota 1995; Sauron 2000; Sauron 2013. Darauf kann hier nicht näher eingegangen werden.

Variation. Auch die Verdichtung der umgebenden Figuren bei Augustus und Agrippa entspricht insofern der realen Praxis, als der Kaiser und andere politische Protagonisten bei öffentlichen Auftritten durch dichtes Geleit in ihrer Bedeutung hervorgehoben wurden. Andererseits wird die visuelle Gliederung heteronom von den Vorgaben des Baues bestimmt: Augustus und Agrippa korrespondieren einander, symmetrisch zu der imaginären Mittelachse des Frieses, als Scharniere zwischen den drei Gruppen der Lictoren, der Priester und der kaiserlichen Familie, die in einem Verhältnis von 4 : 3 : 4 stehen. Und auch hier steht die dynamisch variierte Symmetrie der figürlichen Szene in komplementärer Spannung zu dem vegetabilen Dekor im Feld darunter: Das zentrale Motiv von Akanthuskelch und vertikalem Stängel realisiert die Mittelachse, die im Figurenfries eher imaginär impliziert ist, während die folgenden Nebenachsen zu beiden Seiten, wieder mit bekrönenden Schwänen und Palmetten, einen regelmäßigen Rhythmus vorgeben, der den aufrecht schreitenden Figuren der Prozession eine ornamentale Struktur unterlegt.<sup>32</sup>

Analoge Phänomene sind an den übrigen Elementen des figürlichen und ornamentalen Schmuckes der Ara Pacis zu erkennen. Auch an diesem Denkmal aber schließt sich der Dekor, wie in zahlreichen eingehenden Interpretationen hervorgehoben wurde, zu einer ‚Welt‘ des augusteischen Friedens, in dem sich die mythische Vorzeit mit dem Opfer des Aeneas und der Geburt von Romulus und Remus, die ideale Gegenwart mit dem Kaiser, den Vertretern der römischen Oberschicht in den großen Priesterschaften und der kaiserlichen Familie, und schließlich die Allegorien von Hauptstadt und Reich zu einem umfassenden Panorama vereinigen. Wieder ist dies Kosmos im Sinn von Wert und Ordnung.

Auch die neue Form des großformatigen Reliefbildes ist jedoch nicht durchweg zur Erreichung von nahsichtiger Erkennbarkeit eingesetzt worden. Die Traians- und die Marcus-Säule mit ihren narrativen Reliefbändern entziehen sich durch ihre Höhe von 100 Fuß und den extrem steilen Sichtwinkel weitgehend der genauen Betrachtung. Die Forschung hat aus dieser Tatsache bekanntlich extrem unterschiedliche Folgerungen gezogen: Paul Veyne hat die eingeschränkte Sichtbarkeit gegen die komplexen Interpretationen der Archäologen ins Feld geführt; dagegen hat Martin Galinier die komplexen Bedeutungen der Reliefs zum Anlass genommen, um entsprechend gute Sichtbedingungen zu rekonstruieren. Ein angemessenes Verständnis ist aber wohl nur zu erreichen, wenn man beide Realitäten anerkennt: komplexe Bedeutung *und* eingeschränkte Sichtbarkeit. Das scheinbare Paradox dieses Befundes kann grundsätzlich analog zum Parthenon – ebenso wie zu gotischen Kathedralen, dem Monument für Vittorio Emanuele II. in Rom oder dem Mausoleum von Mao Zedong – mit dem oben dargelegten Konzept des Dekors verständlich gemacht werden: Die Bilder konstituieren den ‚Sinn‘ des Denkmals als vollständig ausgearbei-

<sup>32</sup> Kaiser und dichtes Geleit: Millar 1977, 110–122.

tetes Konzept, ihre Wahrnehmung wird in einer Verbindung von partieller Sicht und komplettierender Überzeugung vollzogen.<sup>33</sup>

## Standbilder und Architektur: Der ‚Kaisersaal‘ von Side

Standbilder hatten in Griechenland seit dem Beginn der Skulptur in großem Format feste Orte, an denen sie ihre Aufgabe der Repräsentation erfüllten: vor allem Heiligtümer, Gräber, später auch die Agora und öffentliche Anlagen von verschiedener Funktion. Besonders in den Heiligtümern traten sie seit der Frühzeit in Beziehung zu den funktionalen Anlagen, im Lauf der Zeit insbesondere zur sakralen Architektur, später auch zu verschiedenen öffentlichen Gebäuden. Seit dem Hellenismus und insbesondere in der römischen Kaiserzeit führte dieser Prozess bekanntlich zu einer dichten Integration von Standbildern und anderen Bildwerken in die öffentliche Architektur, in deutlicher Korrespondenz zu der geschilderten Entstehung des Reliefbildes. Der übergreifende Begriff dafür ist ‚*ornamentum urbis*‘. Damit kommt die Spannung zwischen autonomer Repräsentation der Bilder und heteronomem Dekor der Architektur besonders pointiert zur Geltung.<sup>34</sup>

Die damit bezeichnete Entwicklung bedarf einer systematischen Untersuchung, die hier nicht geleistet werden kann. Im Folgenden werden nur kurz einige wesentliche Schritte benannt.

Seit dem Wiederbeginn der griechischen Bildkunst im 9. und 8. Jahrhundert v. Chr. wurden kleinformatige Bildwerke in spezifischen Kontexten verwendet, vor allem als Beigaben in Gräbern und Votive in Heiligtümern. Dort bildeten sie kohärente Ensembles, die in ihren Themen und Formen auf die kulturellen Orte der Gräber und Heiligtümer bezogen waren. Mit dem Aufkommen der Großplastik traten dann die Standbilder an Gräbern, in Heiligtümern und zunehmend in anderen öffentlichen Bereichen wie der Agora durch ortsfeste Aufstellung in einen dauerhaft fixierten visuellen Bezug: Es entstanden Räume, in denen lebende Menschen und Bildwerke in religiösen, sepulkralen, politischen und sozialen Praktiken zueinander in Interaktion treten konnten. In den Heiligtümern der archaischen Zeit stellten die Standbilder Gottheiten als Adressaten der kultischen Handlungen, ideale Mitglieder der Gesellschaft als beobachtende Teilnehmer der Rituale, wilde Tiere und Monster als beherrschte Gegenbilder der religiösen und kulturellen Lebensordnung vor Augen. Als bildliche Partner und Zeugen der rituellen Vorgänge wurden sie vor allem in den Zonen aufgestellt, wo die Rituale stattfanden; am Eingang zum Heiligtum, wo sie die

<sup>33</sup> Veyne 1988; Veyne 1990; Settis 1992, 40–52; Galinier 2007; demnächst T. Hölscher 2018, Kapitel 6.

<sup>34</sup> *Ornamentum urbis*: Bravi 2014.

Besucher ‚empfangen‘, und entlang des Hauptweges zum Tempel, wo sie die Prozessionen als ‚Betrachter‘ säumten, wie etwa im Heraion von Samos oder im Zeus-Heiligtum von Olympia; und um den Raum des Altars, wo sie zusammen mit den lebenden Teilnehmern das Opfer ‚umgaben‘, wie etwa im Asklepios-Heiligtum von Epidauros. Eine ähnliche ‚konzeptuelle Präsenz‘ wurde verdienten Persönlichkeiten in Form von Ehrenstatuen auf der Agora und den Toten in Form von Grabstatuen in den Nekropolen vor den Toren der Städte gegeben. Diese Standbilder dienten in hohem Maß einer autonomen Repräsentation, in Responson zu den lebenden Mitgliedern der Gesellschaft – allerdings immer in klarem inhaltlichem Bezug zu den Anlagen und Architekturen der betreffenden sakralen, politischen und sozialen Räume.<sup>35</sup>

Seit (spät-)klassischer und hellenistischer Zeit führte eine dominierende Tendenz dahin, den Charakter der öffentlichen Räume durch neue Formen der Inszenierung visuell zur Wirkung zu bringen. Die Bauwerke der Heiligtümer wie der Agorai wurden absichtsvoll im Hinblick auf eindrucksvolle Fassaden gestaltet, die Bildwerke wurden ihnen als bildliche ‚Bewohner‘ zugeordnet. Zunehmend wurde die Platzierung von Bildwerken in den architektonisch gestalteten Räumen auf visuelle Wirkung hin ausgerichtet: Vor allem in hellenistischen Städten wurde der Ort mit der größten Sichtbarkeit, ‚*epiphanestatos topos*‘, zum entscheidenden Kriterium für die Aufstellung von öffentlichen Ehrenstatuen und anderen Bildwerken. Das stärkste neue Element waren lange Hallen mit Säulenstellungen, die als Kulissen für sukzessive Aufstellung von Standbildern genutzt wurden. Ein charakteristisches Beispiel ist die Stoa an der Ostseite der Zugangsstraße zum Apollon-Heiligtum von Delos, die im 3. Jahrhundert v. Chr. an den Ecken von zwei markanten pergamenischen Siegesmonumenten eingefasst wurde, zwischen denen dann der Raum mehr und mehr mit Ehrenstatuen gefüllt wurde. Zwar ohne einheitliche Planung, aber aufgrund eines allgemeinen Grundkonzepts entstand auf dieser Weise eine Art von sich selbst generierender visueller Gesamtwirkung. Eine ähnliche autopoietische Integration von Architektur und Standbildern findet sich etwa an der Agora von Priene, die Übernahme der Praxis im späthellenistischen Italien ist an der Südseite des Forums von Pompeii zu beobachten. Wie intentional dies Zusammenspiel von Bau- und Bildwerken nicht nur gestaltet, sondern auch wahrgenommen wurde, wird aus den bekannten Fresken aus den *praedia* der Iulia Felix in Pompeii deutlich, auf denen die rahmenden Kolonnaden um das Forum der Stadt mit den Reiterstatuen vor den Intercolumnnien zu eindrucksvoller Wirkung gebracht sind. Agorai, Heiligtümer und andere öffentliche Anlagen entwickelten sich zu architektonischen Bühnen, auf denen die Bildwerke, obgleich diachron und in einzelnen Initiativen aufgestellt, zu synchronen Bild-Gemeinschaften

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<sup>35</sup> Einiges dazu bei T. Hölscher 2015a. Zu Standbildern in archaischen Heiligtümern siehe Duplouy 2006, 185–216; Franssen 2011; T. Hölscher 2015b; Bildwerke und rituelle Räume im Heiligtum von Olympia: T. Hölscher 2002.

ten von ruhmreichen Menschen, zum Teil zusammen mit Göttern und Heroen, zusammenwuchsen.<sup>36</sup>

In der Konsequenz dieser Entwicklung begann man dann, architektonische Komplexe schon von Anbeginn mit einheitlichen ‚Programmen‘ von Standbildern und anderen Bildwerken auszustatten. Ein frühes Beispiel ist in Rom das Grab der Scipionen, das um die Mitte des 2. Jahrhunderts v. Chr. mit einer neuen Fassade versehen wurde: Darin waren, vielleicht in drei Nischen, Bildnisstatuen des P. Cornelius Scipio Africanus maior, des L. Cornelius Scipio Asiaticus und angeblich ihres Ruhmesdichters Ennius aufgestellt.<sup>37</sup> Besondere Bedeutung für diese Praxis hatten die temporären Theaterbauten für die aufwändigen Spiele aus Anlass von Triumphen seit dem 2. Jahrhundert v. Chr., in deren Szenenfronten die erbeuteten Bildwerke vor allem aus Griechenland ausgestellt wurden: Den oft zitierten Höhepunkt stellte der Bau des M. Aemilius Scaurus von 58 v. Chr. dar, mit einer Fassadenarchitektur von 360 Säulen und insgesamt 3000 Standbildern aus Bronze. In denselben Jahren setzte Pompeius, nach seinem Triumph über Mithridates 61 v. Chr., in seiner monumentalen Theateranlage mit der anschließenden Gartenporticus auf dem Marsfeld ein derartiges Konzept in eine dauerhafte Architektur mit einem komplexen Programm von Bildwerken um. Aus schriftlichen Quellen ist bekannt, dass drei Tempel mit Kultbildern für Venus Victrix, Virtus und Felicitas die Cavea bekrönten und die ganze Anlage unter das Motto von Sieg und Glück stellten. Vierzehn monumentale Standbilder repräsentierten die *nationes*, die Pompeius in den Kriegen gegen Mithridates unterworfen hatte; eine andere Gruppe von kolossalen Statuen stellte die neun Musen dar, die in der erkämpften Friedenszeit das Leben bestimmen sollten. Bilder von historischen Dichterinnen, dazu von berühmten Hetären und von mythischen Müttern, die ungewöhnliche Ausgeburten zur Welt gebracht hatten, evozierten eine Atmosphäre der Venus in allen ihren Facetten. Hinzu kamen vier originale griechische Gemälde, die Kadmos und Europa, Alexander den Großen, einen angreifenden Krieger und ein Opfer von Stieren als Exempel der Weltherrschaft, der militärischen *virtus* und der *pietas* darstellten. Die Quellen lassen nicht genau erkennen, wo die verschiedenen Bildwerke innerhalb der Anlage aufgestellt waren. Deutlich ist aber, dass sie alle ihren Referenzpunkt in einer Bildnisstatue des Pompeius selbst hatten, die in einem Saal in der Achse der Porticus stand, der als Versammlungsraum des Senats dienen sollte.<sup>38</sup>

Die Theateranlage des Pompeius mit ihren vielen Bildwerken, teils älteren griechischen Gemälden teils neu gefertigten Standbildern, wurde zuletzt wieder als

<sup>36</sup> Sichtbarkeit und *epiphanestatos topos*: Bielfeldt 2012. Hellenistische Städte: Ma 2013. Delos, spät-klassisch und hellenistisch: Griesbach 2013. Priene: Raeck 1995; Bielfeldt 2012. Fresken in der *praedia* der Iulia Felix in Pompeii: Olivito 2013.

<sup>37</sup> Coarelli 1988; Giuliani 1986, 163–189; Papini 2004, 395–400.

<sup>38</sup> Zu den Bildwerken im Pompeius-Theater siehe Coarelli 1971–1972; Fuchs 1981–1982; Sauron 1987; Bravi 2014, 73–84 (mit weiterer Lit.).

„Pompey’s Museum“ für „Culture and History“ betitelt und gedeutet. Entsprechend wird die verbreitete Praxis, Meisterwerke der griechischen Malerei und Skulptur in öffentlichen Gebäuden Roms auszustellen, immer wieder nach dem Konzept einer „musealen“ Ausstellung von „Kunst“ für das gebildete Publikum der Stadt Rom erklärt. Dem ist entgegenzuhalten, dass das Konzept des „Museums“ als eines ausgegrenzten Raumes von „Kunst“ und „Bildung“ ein neuzeitliches Phänomen ist, und dass in der Antike alle Bildwerke in einem fundamentalen Sinn als Faktoren des religiösen, sozialen und politischen Lebens in die öffentlichen und privaten Räume der Gesellschaft eingebunden waren. Die Theateranlage des Pompeius zeigt in exemplarischer Weise, dass die Bildwerke dazu dienten, diesen öffentlichen Raum als eine ‚Welt‘ der römischen Herrschaft in Sieg und Glück zu definieren.<sup>39</sup>

Derartige konzeptuelle Bilder-Welten sind mit Hilfe schriftlicher Zeugnisse in zahlreichen anderen Bauwerken der römischen Kaiserzeit zu rekonstruieren:

Der Tempel der Concordia am Forum Romanum wurde von seinem Bauherrn Tiberius mit einer höchst bewusst gewählten Auswahl von Götterstatuen griechischer Bildhauer ausgestattet, die die Nischen in der Cella schmückten und die Treppen der Front flankierten: Zeus, Hera und Athena als Äquivalente zur Kapitolonischen Trias; Apollon und Leto mit den Zwillingen als Götter des Palatin, dazu Apollons Sohn Asklepios; Demeter, Ares und Hestia als Äquivalente zu den Gottheiten der Regia, Mars und Ops Consiva, sowie zu dem römischen Ur-Heiligtum der Vesta, am Ostrand des Forum.<sup>40</sup>

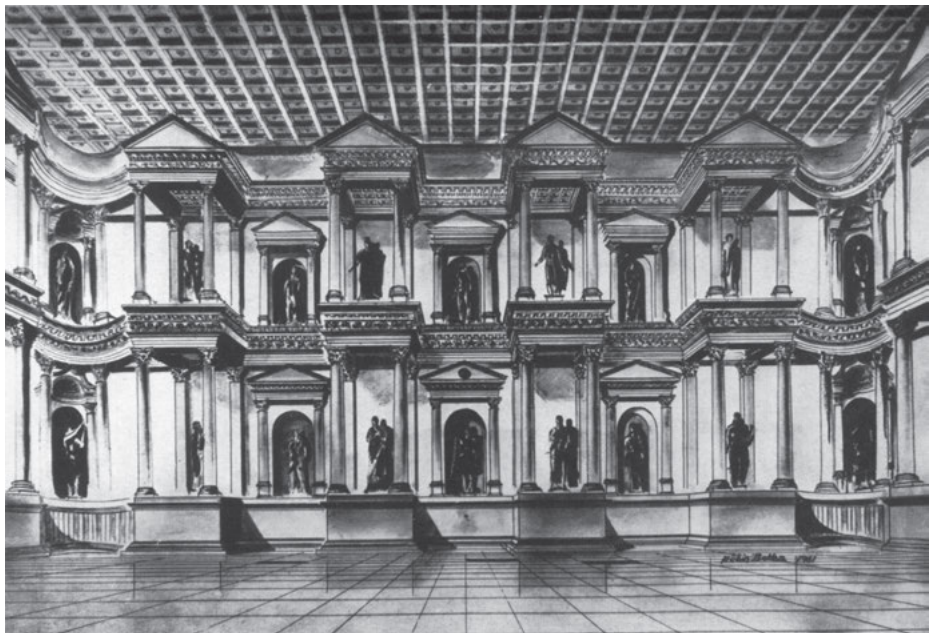
In entsprechender Weise beschreibt Pausanias den Innenraum des Heraion von Olympia, wo die Nischen zwischen den Innensäulen zu seiner Zeit mit alten Standbildern geschmückt waren, die aus ihren ursprünglichen Kontexten herausgelöst worden waren. In ihrer neuen Konstellation stellten sie eine sehr bewusst konzipierte Bilderwelt der Kulte von Mädchen und Frauen vor Augen, die sich in Olympia um die Göttin Hera formierten. Auch hier ist ‚Decor‘ nicht rein ästhetische Zier, sondern sinnstiftender Schmuck.<sup>41</sup>

Der Schritt von sukzessiv gewachsenen Ensembles zu homogen konzipierten ‚Programmen‘ ist anschaulich in Rom zu beobachten: Dort waren am republikanischen Forum die Ehrenstatuen und andere Bildwerke seit dem 4. Jahrhundert v. Chr. zu einem exemplarischen Panorama historischer, mythischer und göttlicher Figuren der *res publica* akkumuliert worden; daraus wurde dann am Forum des Augustus ein systematisches Konzept einer ‚vollständigen‘ Präsenz großer Männer Roms ent-

<sup>39</sup> Gegen das Konzept antiker ‚Museen‘ siehe T. Hölscher 1989; T. Hölscher 1994; T. Hölscher 2015a, 205–214; Bravi 1998.

<sup>40</sup> Zur Bild-Ausstattung des Concordia-Tempels siehe Kellum 1990; Bravi 1998; Celani 1998, 125–132 und 209–213 (Deutung im Sinn eines Museums); Bravi 2014, 185–201; demnächst T. Hölscher 2018, Kapitel 6.

<sup>41</sup> Paus. 5.17.1–4. Dazu Krumeich 2008; Hupfloher 2012; demnächst T. Hölscher 2017.



**Abb. 2.8a:** Sog. Kaisersaal von Side, Mitte 2. Jh. n. Chr.

?	?	Kore	Sand.- Binder	Disk. Ludovisi	(Apox.?)	Hermes	Diadum.	Disk. Myron	?	?	Apollo	Marsyas
Kl. Herc.	Nike	Demeter	?	Hermes Kyr.-Per.	Port. Stat.	Port. Stat.	Port. Stat.	(Ares Borgh.?)	Doryph.?	Nemesis	Hygieia	Asklep.

**Abb. 2.8b:** Verteilung der gefundenen Skulpturen (Rekonstruktion T. Hölscher).

wickelt: von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart, in chronologischer Sequenz, in der Antithese von berühmten Familien und *gens Iulia*, und in konsequentem Bezug zu der Architektur des Raumes. Aus dem gewachsenen politischen Gedächtnis der Republik wird ein geschlossenes geschichtliches Konzept.<sup>42</sup>

Ähnliche Phänomene sind von der Forschung seit längerer Zeit für verschiedene Bautypen der römischen Architektur aufgezeigt worden, vor allem für Theater und Thermen.<sup>43</sup> Ein konkretes Beispiel, das zugleich die weite Verbreitung der Praxis im Römischen Reich bezeugt, ist der so genannte Kaisersaal an der Staatsagora von Side (Abb. 2.8a–b). Der monumentale Versammlungsraum, der unter anderem dem Kaiserkult diente, war im Inneren mit einer prachtvollen Blendarchitektur in zwei

<sup>42</sup> Standbilder Forum Romanum: Sehlmeier 1999; Walter 2004, 139–143. Augustus-Forum: Zanker 1968; Spannagel 1999.

<sup>43</sup> Fuchs 1987; Manderscheid 1981.



Stockwerken geschmückt, in deren Nischen ein vielgestaltiges Ensemble von Porträtstatuen und Idealfiguren, vor allem Kopien nach griechischen Originalen, aufgestellt war. Wenngleich die Bildwerke nicht vollständig gefunden wurden und die Fundorte nicht bei allen genau bekannt sind, so lässt sich doch aus den einigermaßen gesicherten Daten eine ungefähre Vorstellung von dem Konzept gewinnen.<sup>44</sup>

Im Zentrum, wohl in der unteren Etage, standen die Porträtfiguren. Die Köpfe sind verloren, doch muss es sich wohl um Darstellungen des regierenden Kaisers, wahrscheinlich Antoninus Pius, zusammen mit seinen vorgesehenen Nachfolgern gehandelt haben. In ihrer unmittelbaren Umgebung waren sie gerahmt von Figuren der gymnasialen Ausbildung der Jugend: den antithetischen Diskuswerfern des Myron und der Sammlung Ludovisi, dem Apoxyomenos des Lysipp, sowie dem Hermes Kyrene-Perinth und dem Diadoumenos des Polyklet. In den Nischen der Ecken standen, als korrespondierende Mächte, links Demeter und Kore als Gottheiten der agrarischen Fruchtbarkeit, rechts Nemesis, wohl als Gottheit der kriegerischen Rache gegen äußere Feinde. An der linken Seitenwand ist aus den Figuren der ‚Kleinen Herculanerin‘ und einer Nike kein klares Konzept zu erkennen, an der gegenüberliegenden Wand dagegen ergibt sich mit Apollo und Marsyas sowie Apolls Sohn Asklepios eine Gruppe, die die Vorstellungen von göttlichem Recht und physischem Heil umfasst. Die weiteren, nicht genauer lokalisierten Figuren aus dem Saal, Ares Borghese, Hera vom Typus Ephesos, Hygieia sowie Herakles (Keule), lassen sich ohne Probleme in dies Programm einfügen.

Auch der Concordia-Tempel in Rom und das Heraion in Olympia mit ihren griechischen Bildwerken wurden immer wieder als antike Museen gedeutet, und sogar die Skulpturen des Kaisersaales von Side wurden als eine kunstgeschichtlich orientierte Auswahl von Kopien nach Meisterwerken der größten griechischen Bildhauer gewertet. Dagegen sprechen sehr deutlich die inhaltlichen Konzepte, die in der Auswahl und Anordnung der Werke deutlich werden: Überall ist sinnvolle Selektion der Bildthemen zu erkennen, nirgends kommt es zu zufälligen oder redundanten Themen, die durch rein ästhetische Kriterien verursacht wären, und wo die Aufstellungen rekonstruierbar sind, sind inhaltliche Konstellationen zu erkennen.

Das heißt nicht, dass solche Konzepte von den Betrachtern immer als solche wahrgenommen wurden. Damit stellt sich die allgemeine Frage nach der spezifischen Wirkung von Dekor und Ornament.

<sup>44</sup> Die Skulpturen bei Inan 1975, Nr. 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 10, 12, 20, 22, 28, 32, 36, 37, 54, 55, 67, 69, 77, 94, 345, 421, 422, 423, 424 und 425. Dazu Rezension von Linfert 1979; Linfert 1995.

## Schluss: Dekor, Wert, Sichtbarkeit

Für den modernen Betrachter ist der figürliche Schmuck der griechischen und teilweise auch der römischen Architektur durch eine eklatante Diskrepanz zwischen künstlerischem Rang und thematischer Komplexität auf der einen Seite und eingeschränkter Sichtbarkeit auf der anderen Seite geprägt.<sup>45</sup>

Die Einschränkung der Sichtbarkeit wird durch mehrere Faktoren hervorgerufen: Generell sind Metopen und Frieze, Giebel und Akrotere, wie bereits hervorgehoben, am Bau in großer Höhe, das heißt für Sicht aus mehr oder minder steilem Winkel angebracht. Zudem sind am Zeus-Tempel von Olympia die Metopen, am Parthenon und am Hephaisteion in Athen die Frieze nur entweder von außen durch die Intercolumnien der Säulen oder aus dem Inneren der Peristase in extrem ungünstiger Höhe zu sehen. Zahlreiche Bauten, wie die Schatzhäuser von Siphnos und Athen in Delphi, waren nicht von allen Seiten zu umgehen, so dass die Frieze bzw. Metopen einer ganzen Längsseite überhaupt nicht zu sehen waren. In anderen Heiligtümern, etwa der Akropolis von Athen, waren der Zugang, der Prozessionsweg und der Altarplatz so gelegen, dass in der normalen Situation der Wahrnehmung des Parthenon die beiden Fassaden und die nördliche Langseite, nicht aber die südliche Seite in den Blick kamen; wie viele Besucher zusätzlich die Südseite umschritten, ist zumindest fraglich. Dasselbe gilt für das Erechtheion mit seinem vielfach abgewinkelten Fries, der nur durch Herumgehen auf verschiedenen Gehniveaus, mit Betreten und Verlassen verschiedener angrenzender sakraler Bezirke, ganz zu betrachten war. Am Parthenon kommt hinzu, dass das ‚Programm‘ des Bildschmucks nur bei mehrmaligem Umschreiten zu verstehen war; insbesondere der Fries mit der doppelten Prozession von der Südwest-Ecke um beide Seiten der Cella bis zur Mitte der Ost-Seite erforderte eine zweifache Umgehung. Wenn man berücksichtigt, dass die normalen Besucher der Akropolis nicht zum Studium von Bildprogrammen, sondern zur Teilnahme am Kult kamen, dann wird man bei den meisten Betrachtern kaum übermäßige Anstrengungen voraussetzen, um die Schwierigkeiten des Sehens zu überwinden.

In anderer Weise war die Wahrnehmung der bildlichen Ausstattung in römischen Anlagen und Architekturen wie den Kaiserfora und dem Concordia-Tempel in Rom oder dem Kaisersaal von Side zumindest partiell eingeschränkt. Hier waren es vor allem die funktionalen Voraussetzungen, durch die die Aufmerksamkeit der Besucher vielfach in ganz andere Richtungen, auf die öffentlichen und sozialen Vorgänge in diesen Räumen, gelenkt wurde. Paul Zanker hat am Beispiel der Kaiserfora von Rom hervorgehoben, dass hier wohl einerseits vielfach nur eine allgemeine Atmosphäre von Bau- und Bildwerken erfahren wurde, andererseits häufig ganz selektiv

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<sup>45</sup> Zum Folgenden siehe T. Hölscher 2009. Dazu Ridgway 1999, 74–102; Kyrieleis 2012/2013, 118–119.

einzelne Bildwerke wahrgenommen wurden, ohne dass dabei ein übergreifendes ‚Programm‘ in den Blick kam.<sup>46</sup>

Diese starke Einschränkung der Sichtbarkeit und der Wahrnehmung hatte jedoch in keiner Weise Konsequenzen für den künstlerischen Rang und den thematischen Reichtum des Bauschmuckes. An den Skulpturen des Parthenon haben Generationen von Archäologen und Kunstkennern die superbe Qualität der plastischen Gestaltung gepriesen; der Fries und die Giebel haben eine Vielzahl von Deutungen hervorgerufen, die gerade in ihren Kontroversen die Komplexität der Bildthemen bezeugen.

Man darf diese scheinbar diskrepanten Phänomene nicht gegeneinander auspielen. Die eingeschränkte Sichtbarkeit bedeutet nicht, dass komplexe Formen und Themen keine Rolle spielen; und die anspruchsvollen Formen und Themen bedeuten nicht, dass sie doch irgendwie aus der Nähe zu sehen gewesen sein müssen. Eine sinnvolle Erklärung muss die scheinbare Diskrepanz aufzulösen versuchen.

Die Frage kann hier nicht in der ganzen Tragweite untersucht werden. Deutlich ist aber, dass die traditionellen Ansätze einer semiotischen Kommunikationstheorie hier an Grenzen stoßen. Diese gehen in der Regel von einer Symmetrie der intensiven Produktion und der ebenso intensiven Rezeption von – in diesem Fall visuellem – ‚Sinn‘ aus: Die ‚Sender‘ produzieren Bilder, die als autonome ‚Zeichen‘ dichten ‚Sinn‘ transportieren, den die Empfänger als solchen zu verstehen suchen. Dies Modell erweist sich als zu einfach, offensichtlich sind die Phänomene vielschichtiger. Sie können aber in einem erweiterten Konzept der Kommunikation von visuellem Sinn erfasst werden.<sup>47</sup>

Die Bilder der antiken Bauwerke sind, bei aller potentiellen Komplexität, zunächst als ‚ornamentale‘ Elemente auf die Architektur bezogen. An und mit den Bauwerken bilden sie, in dieser potentiellen Komplexität, einen ‚Kosmos‘, in dem materieller, ideeller und ästhetischer ‚Wert‘ in eins fallen: Der Begriff ‚Kosmos‘ benennt grundsätzlich die normative Ordnung der menschlichen Kultur, von festlicher Kleidung und Schmückung der Menschen über ‚richtige‘ Verhaltensweisen bis zur geordneten Aufstellung von Heeren, dann aber auch die regelhafte Ordnung der Natur; speziell in der Architektur bezeichnet ‚Kosmos‘ die dekorativen Elemente, von Friesen und Metopen-Triglyphen-Reihen über schmückende Standbilder bis zu ephemeren Girlanden.<sup>48</sup> Die Betrachter sind zunächst dazu aufgerufen, diesen ‚Kosmos‘ *als solchen* wahrzunehmen, der *in seiner Gesamtheit* die Steigerung des kulturellen Wertes des Bauwerks leistet. Diese integrale Funktion des figürlichen Schmuckes ist der Funktion der intensiven Übermittlung von spezifischem ‚Sinn‘ in den einzelnen Elementen

<sup>46</sup> Zanker 1997.

<sup>47</sup> Siehe dazu demnächst T. Hölscher 2018.

<sup>48</sup> Zum Folgenden siehe ausgezeichnet Marconi 2004. Allgemein zum Begriff und Konzept des Kosmos: Casevitz 1989; Cartledge 1998; Finkelberg 1998; in diesem Band: Squire, 2, Anm. 3; Dietrich, 167–172; Barham. Zum Begriff des Kosmos in der Architektur: Hellmann 1992, 231–233.

der Bildwerke übergeordnet. Das Sehen soll in dieser Abstufung der Stiftung von Sinn erfolgen: Die Sichtbarkeit im Einzelnen steht hinter der Wahrnehmung des Ganzen zurück.

Das bedeutet aber auf keinen Fall, dass die einzelnen Bilder auf die Schaffung von ästhetischer Kraft und thematischer Komplexität verzichten müssten. Im Gegenteil: Der ‚Kosmos‘ des Bauwerks als materielle, thematische und ästhetische ‚Ordnung‘ entsteht und besteht aus der Konstellation der einzelnen *hochrangigen* und *komplexen* Elemente: der kostbaren Materialien, der technisch perfekt geschnittenen Quadern und Säulen, und darüber hinaus der brillanten Ornamente und der suggestiv gestalteten Bilder. Ohne die Hochrangigkeit im Einzelnen würde auch das Ganze keinen kulturellen ‚Wert‘ erreichen.

Die Referenz des einzelnen Bildes auf die Architektur, in die die Bilder eingebunden sind, wird vielfach durch ‚ornamentale‘ Gestaltung besonders hervorgehoben. Sie kann sich in forcierter Integration wie in Prinias, in stärkerer Autonomie wie am Parthenon, oder in ornamentaler Subordination wie in den späteren Girlanden-, Ranken-, Waffen- und Sakralgerät-Friesen zeigen.

Grundsätzlich aber besitzt der ‚Wert‘ des Dekors eine gewisse intrinsische Autonomie, die über die Sichtbarkeit hinaus reicht, jedenfalls nicht in der Wirkung der Sichtbarkeit aufgeht. Kosmos im Sinn von – materieller, thematischer, ästhetischer – ‚Ordnung‘ muss *als solcher* vollständig sein, gleich ob es sich um die Ordnung eines geschmückten Bauwerks, die Ordnung einer Polis oder die Ordnung der Welt und des Universums handelt. Der Mensch, der die Ordnung betrachtet und zu verstehen sucht, wird sie in der Regel nur unvollständig wahrnehmen können: Einerseits werden ihm bestimmte Teile verborgen bleiben, andererseits wird er bestimmte Teile nur unvollkommen und ungefähr wahrnehmen können. Das gilt für die entfernteren Zonen der Welt und des Universums, für die Randbereiche der Polis und der Bürgerschaft, wie für die schlecht oder nicht sichtbaren Teile einer Architektur.<sup>49</sup>

In allen diesen Fällen ist es aber entscheidend, dass der Betrachter die Gewissheit hat, dass die Ordnung zum einen tatsächlich vollständig ist, auch in den Bereichen, die ihm verborgen bleiben; und dass sie zum anderen in allen Teilen eine geordnete Form hat, auch dort, wo er es sie nur noch ungenau sehen kann. Das gilt auch für die Bild-Elemente der Architektur, die in der Höhe nur eingeschränkt sichtbar sind, wie für die, die an unzugänglichen Stellen verborgen sind.

Dies ist der eigentliche Sinn der Wahrnehmung: nicht reines Perzipieren, sondern das Gesehene ‚für wahr nehmen‘ und sich selbst in die wahrgenommene Ordnung einzu-‚ordnen‘.

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<sup>49</sup> Zur (relativen) Autonomie der Bildwerke gegenüber den Betrachtern und ihren Voraussetzungen des Sehens siehe vorläufig T. Hölscher 2012.

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## Abbildungsnachweise

- Abb. 2.1: Repro aus Kottaridi 2013, 152.
- Abb. 2.2: Repro aus Rolley 2003, Taf. 4.
- Abb. 2.3a–c: Repro aus Beyer 1976, Taf. 13, 21 und 24.
- Abb. 2.4: Repro aus Kyrieleis 2012/2013, 54, Abb. 1b.
- Abb. 2.5: © Fotoarchiv Hölscher. Foto Dieter Johannes.
- Abb. 2.6: Repro aus von Steuben 1973, 13, Abb. 1.
- Abb. 2.7: © Photothek, Institut für Klassische Archäologie Heidelberg.
- Abb. 2.8a: Repro aus Mansel 1963, Abb. 90.
- Abb. 2.8b: Verteilung der gefundenen Skulpturen nach T. Hölscher.



Jonas Grethlein

# Ornamental and formulaic patterns: The semantic significance of form in early Greek vase-painting and Homeric epic\*

## From ornament to the ornamental

Ancient vase-painting makes it hard to sustain the dichotomy between ornament and figure, deeply ingrained as it is in our minds.<sup>1</sup> In a long essay from 1968, Nikolaus Himmelmann makes a strong case for the figurative dimension of the ornament in Greek vase-painting: 'Contrary to some modern epochs, in Greek art the ornamental, seemingly abstract form is not deprived of its figurative significance'.<sup>2</sup> Flowery ornaments, for instance, are not merely decorative, but still signify vegetation.<sup>3</sup> While Himmelmann concentrates on Geometric and Orientalising vase-painting, Jeffrey Hurwit observes that, after the separation of image from floral ornament around 600 BC, Archaic and Classical artists consciously undercut the boundary between the two.<sup>4</sup> Figures cross into the field of decoration and ornaments are treated as real vegetation. On an amphora in Boston, for instance, we see Dionysus within a cluster of vines populated by satyrs (Fig. 3.1). The branch of ivy held by Dionysus replicates the ivy that decorates the handles of the vase. The distinction between figure and ornament is further blurred by one of the satyrs who touches the lotus-palmette chain framing the top of the panel: 'It is as if he is trying to decide whether it is vegetation, too, or whether he can keep on climbing and so scamper out of the vineyard ... into conventional ornament'.<sup>5</sup> Commenting on similar transgressions between ornament and figure, Richard Neer argues that Euphronius and the Pioneers knowingly gener-

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\* I wish to thank Nikolaus Dietrich and Michael Squire for their helpful comments and suggestions on an earlier draft of this chapter.

1 For recent attempts to question the dichotomy between ornament and figure in art history, see Beyer and Spies 2012 and the special issue on 'ornement/ornemental' in *Perspective* 1–2 (2010/2011); cf. the historiographical overview in Squire's introduction to this volume.

2 Himmelmann 1968, 266: 'Im Gegensatz zu mancher modernen Epoche erleidet die ornamentale, scheinbar abstrakte Form im Griechischen im Allgemeinen keinen Verlust an Gegenständlichkeit.' See Haug 2015, 25–29 for a survey of works on ornament in early Greek vase-painting, along with Haug's chapter in this book.

3 Cf. e.g. Kéi's chapter in this volume (with further references to Kéi's work).

4 Hurwit 1992. On the frames of Greek vase-painting, see also the chapters in this volume by Kéi and Neer; cf. also Marconi 2017 and Platt and Squire 2017, esp. 12–21, 60–65 (with further bibliography).

5 Hurwit 1992, 63.

ate friction between such decorative elements as palmettes and figures rendered with breathtaking *mimêsis*.<sup>6</sup>

In this chapter, I suggest redirecting the focus from the motif of the ornament to the category of the ornamental. I will follow, and expand on, recent work that views ornaments as the most marked part of a more general ornamental aspect of pictures. Considering this ornamental character will drive home that ornament, far from being opposed to image, is an aspect of representation that is constitutive to images. Moreover, the notion of the ornamental will pave the way for a fresh look at picture and narrative as two modes of representation that are distinct and yet share some common ground. Whereas the comparison across media provides a broad set-up, I shall focus on very early material, namely Archaic Greek vase-painting and Homeric epic. I will juxtapose, more precisely, the ornamental in the former with formulae in the latter to explore the semantic significance of both.

The scholarly interest in the ornamental as a pictorial category can be traced back to Theodor Hetzer and Otto Pächt. Both were concerned with the patterning of the pictorial field and how it relates to the represented space. Whereas Hetzer identified the ornamental as a characteristic feature of German art, which was then adopted by Italian artists in the sixteenth century, Pächt emphasised the role of ‘Bildmuster’ in Dutch paintings of the fifteenth century.<sup>7</sup> More recently, Jean-Claude Bonne has conceptualised the ornamental in an investigation of ornaments in mediaeval Celtic art.<sup>8</sup> While Hetzer opposes the ornamental to the ornament, Bonne considers the ornament as a special form of the ornamental. The ornamental is not a motif, but a ‘modus operandi whose structuring function lends itself to crossing all genres’.<sup>9</sup> Bonne provides the following definition:<sup>10</sup>

There is ornamentation to the extent that the configuration of marks, stripped of all meaning, tends to obey principles of construction that allow the covering, the dividing and the orderly articulation of the field or body of inscription. And this, as well as other objects considered, and their articulations can correspond to those of the ornament (and be reinforced by them), or, on the contrary, clash with them.

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**6** Neer 2002, 54–65 – and above all Neer’s chapter in this book. On the representation of palmettes, see also Jacobsthal 1927, 73–110.

**7** Hetzer 1987; Pächt 1933.

**8** Bonne 1996. See also Bonne 1997. From the very different perspective of *Systemtheorie*, the constitutive role of the ornamental has been stressed by Luhmann 1995. For applications of this approach in art history, see e.g. Brüderlin 1994 and Glaser 2002.

**9** Bonne 1996, 213: ‘modus operandi dont la fonction structurante est susceptible de traverser tous les genres.’

**10** Bonne 1996, 216: ‘Il y a ornementation dans la mesure où la configuration des marques tend à obéir, dans sa littéralité même, à des principes de construction permettant le recouvrement, la partition ou l’articulation ordonnée du champ ou volume d’inscription. Et ceci, ou autre des objets considérés, puisque leurs articulations peuvent correspondre à celles de l’ornement (et se voir renforcées) par elles) ou bien, au contraire, être en décalage par rapport à elles.’



**Fig. 3.1:** Attic black-figure amphora attributed to the Taleides Painter, showing Dionysus within a cluster of vines populated by satyrs, c. 540–530 BC. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: inv. 63.952.

Like other scholars commenting on the ornamental and ornaments, Bonne emphasises the role of repetition.<sup>11</sup>

The notion of iconic difference can help us sharpen the definition of the ornamental.<sup>12</sup> Pictorial representation combines two levels that are distinct but nonetheless interdependent, the representing medium and the represented object. Marks in the pictorial plane yield figures which appear three-dimensional. Now, as Bonne's focus on 'the covering, the dividing and the orderly articulation of the field or body of inscription' implies, the ornamental belongs to the level of the representing medium. Referring to the pictorial plane and not the represented space, the ornamental concerns patterns no matter what they represent. It can be defined as the repetition of forms and colours independent of their representational value. Seen from this perspective, ornaments crystallise the ornamental quality that any pictorial representation, has, even if in various degrees. In ornaments, the structuring of the pictorial plane that inheres in any pictorial mark outweighs the representation of an object without necessarily negating it.

The ornamental structure of pictures is often described in formalist analysis, which, for example, identifies the triangle form of Mary holding Jesus in Renaissance paintings. The ornamental dimension, however, is not confined to expert analysis; it comes to bear in any response to pictures. This can be explained by the 'twofoldedness' which defines 'seeing-in' according to Richard Wollheim.<sup>13</sup> As Wollheim notes, when we see something in pictures, we attend simultaneously to the levels of the representing medium and the represented object. The canvas and the colour dots, as well as the scene they represent, are present in our reception. We may concentrate on either, focusing on the movement of the brushstroke or immersing ourselves in the pictorial world, but we nonetheless remain aware of both levels. Through the attention directed to the representing medium, the ornamental dimension that is described in formalist analysis has an impact on any reception of pictures, no matter how learned it is.

The definition of the ornamental in terms of iconic difference and 'seeing-in' also clarifies the reason why a juxtaposition of the ornamental with figure makes little

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**11** Bonne 1996, 217. For related arguments of the importance of repetition as means of creating figural significance, see Dietrich's chapter in this volume (in the context of Archaic Greek sculpture); cf. also the chapters by e.g. Reinhardt, Elsner, Trimble and Muth (on Roman visual cultural contexts).

**12** Classicists and ancient art historians are particularly sensitive to the historical changes that the notion of the picture undergoes. It has become a commonplace to stress the impact of visual cultures on how pictures are viewed. At the same time, it would be difficult to deny a certain degree of continuity across ages and cultures. The notion of iconic difference as well as Wollheim's idea of 'seeing-in' refer to a phenomenological level that, I contend, is transhistorical: see Grethlein 2017c, 177–190. For some illuminating remarks on the phenomenology of pictorial seeing from the perspective of an ancient art historian, see also Neer 2010, 14–19 – along with Neer's chapter in this book (with related discussion of Wollheim).

**13** Wollheim 1980; 1987, 43–79.

sense. Figuration refers to the level of the represented object. It is thus opposed to abstraction, which also describes the representational status of pictorial marks. The ornamental, however, exists on a different level; it inhabits, so to speak, a different plane, as it belongs to the level of the representing medium. The referential status of patterns does not concern its ornamental quality. The shapes of figures as well as the shapes of abstract entities can be ornamental. Conversely, even ornaments, in which the level of the representational medium is dominant, can be figurative.

The ornamental is a category of the representing medium, yet it spills into the level of the represented object. Ornamental features can be semantically significant, not so much through what they represent as through their mere form. Just as represented objects cannot be dissolved from the representing medium, the form of the representation is inextricably bound up with its content. In the first part of the following investigation, I will look at a famous early ('Protoattic') Greek vase, the Eleusis amphora, which illustrates how the ornamental, crossing the boundary between figuration and abstraction, bleeds into the represented scene and its meaning. In the second part, I will then compare this to a parallel in narrative. The repetitiveness of the formulaic language in Homeric epic is, *mutatis mutandis*, similar to the visual patterns of the ornamental. While primarily a formal feature originating in the oral rhapsodic culture of Archaic Greece, formulaic repetitions have the capacity to generate meaning beyond what they denote. Finally, I will discuss the relation between the ornamental as a transhistorical category and the impact of specific contexts by considering the prominence of the ornamental in vase-painting.

## Chasing semantics: The ornamental on the Eleusis amphora

The Eleusis amphora is an outstanding example of Protoattic vase-painting (Fig. 3.2; cf. also Fig. 8.6).<sup>14</sup> The intense correspondences between three separate pictures make it a particularly intriguing test-case for the claim that the ornamental can be semantically significant. Dating from the first half of the seventh century BC, it was used as a vessel for the corpse of a boy, who, it seems, was too big to fit through the mouth. So the amphora had to be cut into two pieces and was then, with the corpse in it, put together again. In a thought-provoking article, Robin Osborne has used this function of the amphora as a backdrop for an interpretation of the scenes featured on the front. He argues that the blinding of Polyphemus, a fight between a boar and a lion and

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<sup>14</sup> On this vase, see besides Mylonas 1957 also Osborne 1988, 1–6; Martens 1992, 258–264; Grethlein 2016, 90–94; Platt and Squire 2017, 17–21. Richard Neer returns to the vase in his chapter in this volume (218–220).

the pursuit of Perseus by the Gorgons provide a piercing reflection on death.<sup>15</sup> Here, I would like to pursue a different path and, while bypassing the context of the vase, take my cue from a formal analysis. As important as context is, form provides another important key that, as we will see, pertains to semantics. I will first elaborate on the ornamental quality of the vase and show how it bleeds into the meaning of the represented scenes.

To start with, the Eleusis amphora lends itself to proving that figure and ornament are not neatly separated in the vase-painting of that period. The borderline between the figurative front and the ornamental back is transgressed by the decapitated body of Medusa, which reaches far into the rough flowery patterns of the back side.<sup>16</sup> More incisively, on the front side ornaments are not limited to the decorative friezes that are interspersed between the larger figurative friezes. The sparse representation of vegetation is highly stylised and numerous ornaments fill the void between the figures (some of them also covering bodies). Most strikingly, ornament and figure literally converge in the spear that is rammed into Polyphemus' eye – the spear is partly identical with three lines that not only frame the picture of the blinding, but also fully go around the vessel and are therefore ornamental.<sup>17</sup>

It is, however, not the ornaments and how they are entwined with figuration that shall concern us here. Instead I will use the Eleusis amphora as an illustration of the ornamental in the sense sketched above. In *Une esthétique de la transgression*, Didier Martens elaborated on the recurrence and transformation of patterns across the figurative and ornamental friezes of the Eleusis amphora (Fig. 3.3). His formal analysis, while conducted with a different argumentative purpose, furnishes a useful stepping stone for my exploration of the ornamental. Martens concentrates his analysis on the pattern of the triangle. It appears in the largest ornamental band at the foot of the vase which alternatively features black and white rays, both with the top up. As Martens shows, the pattern is taken up in the first figurative frieze featuring the pursuit of Perseus by the Gorgons. Medusa's lower body consists of a white and a black triangle. While here the triangles are turned 180 degrees, the legs of the two living Gorgons each form an upward-pointing triangle. Athena, in contrast, stands and wears an unfitted robe, so her body does not really shape up to a triangle. The legs of Perseus, though, are triangular again and thus laterally continue the visual echo of the ornamental pattern from the foot of the vase.

<sup>15</sup> For a critique of Osborne's interpretation of the Eleusis amphora and its use for social history, see Morris 1993, 28–32; Whitley 1994, 63–65.

<sup>16</sup> On the ornamental back that is not clearly demarcated from the picture on the front, see Haug 2015, 175–176.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Hurwit 1977, 24–25, and Morris 1984, 44–45, who also adduce parallels to it. On the interplay between the figurative and the ornamental in the context of other roughly contemporary vase-paintings, also analysed from a formal perspective, see Squire's introduction to this volume (discussing the 'Euphorbus Plate').

The triangular shape can be traced further in the second figurative frieze on the shoulder showing a boar and a lion. The front and hind legs of the boar form two triangles which stand right above the triangles between the legs of the two Gorgons. The back of the lion is not visible anymore, but other comparable depictions make it very likely that their triangular shape would have corresponded to Perseus' legs below.<sup>18</sup> As the lion raises his left front claw in attack, the space between his front legs opens up – this chimes in well with Athena who figures right underneath. In both cases, the form of the triangle is distorted.

Finally, the neck – with our first iconic attestation of the blinding of Polyphemos: the triangles between the legs of the two comrades of Odysseus correspond with the triangles formed by the front and hind legs of the boar as well as that of the Gorgons and their lower bodies, all along a vertical axis. Like Athena and the front pair of the lion's legs, the first attacker, obviously Odysseus, does not shape up to a triangular form. At the same time, the triangle showing between Polyphemos' lower and upper thighs repeats the form of Perseus' legs as well as, arguably, that of the lion's hind legs.

Now it is nothing special that the legs of figures presented in profile yield a triangle; we can observe this on nearly all vases. On the Eleusis amphora, however, the triangles in the three pictures are closely aligned with each other. Taking up the rays from the bottom, one distorted and three neat lines of triangle create a strong vertical axis that goes through all pictures. The shape of the triangle, cutting across ornament and figure, permeates the entire front of the Eleusis amphora. Set out in an ornamental band, it resurfaces in all three figurative friezes.

Discussions of the ornamental tend to focus on lines and shapes, but it ought not be forgotten that colour is also capable of creating patterns.<sup>19</sup> Again, the Eleusis amphora is a case in point as colour trenchantly reinforces the ornamental link forged between the three figurative friezes. White colour creates a vertical axis that aligns Odysseus, the lion's head and Athena. This white block is opposed by a black axis which also extends through all three pictures, from Polyphemos via the body of the lion to Perseus, whose body seems to have been black too. Colour thus strengthens the vertical axis established by the triangle and other forms.<sup>20</sup>

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**18** Martens 1992, 263.

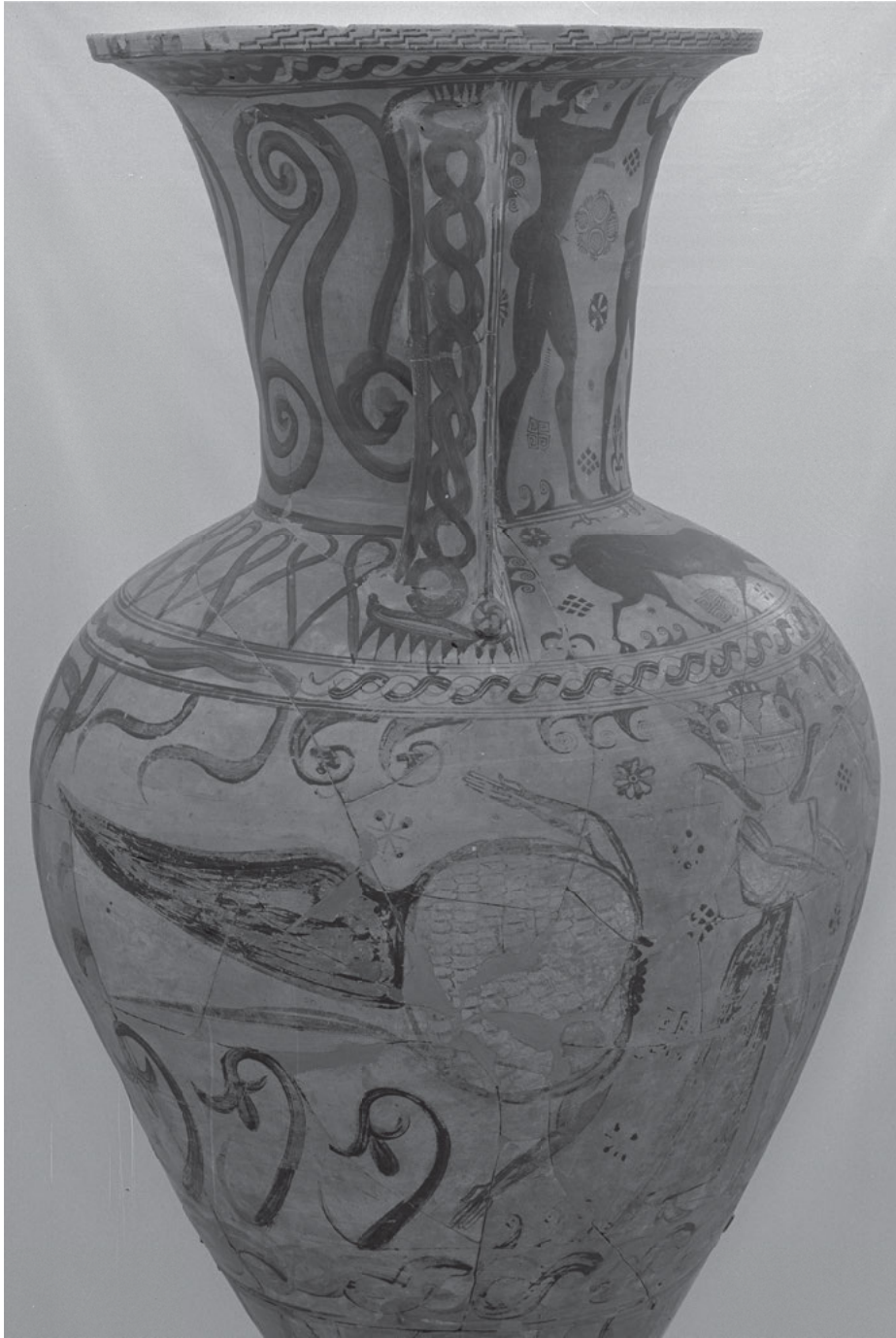
**19** Cf. Roque 2010/2011, 19–20.

**20** One qualification needs to be made: on the one hand, the body of Odysseus and at least some of the dress of Athena seem to have been highlighted by added white; on the other, the head of the lion as well as the face of the lion were kept in the less distinct, if light, colour of the clay. While supporting the argument for a black axis reaching from Polyphemos via the body of the lion to Perseus, this observation may seem to lessen the case for a white axis. That being said, the clay colour of the lion's head still stands out sufficiently against the black of its body, and the limitation of the added white to Odysseus and Athena in this axis reinforces the connection between the goddess and her protégé, on which see below.



**Fig. 3.2:** Protoattic black-figure amphora by the Polyphemos Painter, c. 670–660 BC. Eleusis, Archaeological Museum: inv. 2630.





**Fig. 3.3:** Side-view of the same Eleusis amphora.

Martens uses his formal analysis of patterns on the Eleusis amphora to prove his idea of an ‘animation rythmique’. He explores patterns as one way in which vases can appear as animated. The transformation of patterns, Martens contends, suggests some kind of agency in the vase which reworks their shapes, in our case the rays that resurface on several friezes of the Eleusis amphora. I would like to take up Martens’ formal analysis and deploy it differently. In structuring the pictorial plane, the triangle is a prime example of the ornamental. Of course, the patterning for which I have argued is reinforced through figuration. The reworking of the rays is all the more conspicuous as it is legs that repeat the triangles in the figurative friezes. And yet, the patterning extends to the ornamental friezes and is independent of figuration: it is generated by the repetition of forms and colours no matter what they represent. Besides having representational value, the pictorial marks structure the surface of the vase. Let me now show that this structure, while formal and referring to the medium of representation, nonetheless pertains to the meaning of the represented object.

I start with the two larger pictures, on the belly and the neck, which feature mythological scenes, while the shoulder displays a generic motif. The ornamental structure underscores that both scenes show a single person assaulted by others (Fig. 3.4; cf. Fig. 8.6). The triangles formed by the legs align the forward movements of the aggressors in both pictures. The neat parallel is interrupted by the figure of Athena, which takes the place right under Odysseus. While Polyphemus is assaulted by three men, the third Gorgon has already been decapitated and is relegated to the ornamental back side of the vase. This difference does not detract from the inversion underlined by the ornamental quality of the depictions though: in the upper picture, men attack a monster; in the lower picture, monsters attack a man.

Another pattern that extends across ornamental and figurative friezes reinforces the parallel of the two mythological scenes. Three ornamental friezes show a braiding of two lines, one black, the other white. Like the rays, this is a popular ornamental motive. On the Eleusis amphora, however, the u-like pattern of each line is taken up and reproduced on a larger scale by the snakes which frame the heads of the two living Gorgons. Furthermore, on the neck of the vase, the arms of the two comrades wielding the spear above their heads form a u, mimicking the shape of both ornament and snakes. Only part of Athena’s upper body is preserved, but her right arm, lifted up, suffices to suggest that her arms paralleled the posture of Odysseus. The pattern highlights the parallel acts of aggression, one levelled against Polyphemus, the other against Perseus.

The juxtaposition gains poignancy from the fact that vision is central to both scenes. Robin Osborne has already commented on the thematic prominence of vision on the vase, which he interprets as ‘a construal of death, a discussion of the nature of death as sensory deprivation’,<sup>21</sup> but more can be said. Besides crossing the gaze of

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<sup>21</sup> Osborne 1988, 4.



**Fig. 3.4:** Detail of the Cyclops scene on the neck of the same Eleusis amphora.

the vase's beholder, the petrifying look of the Gorgons contrasts with the blinding of Polyphemus: the former highlights the power of the eye; the latter reveals its vulnerability.<sup>22</sup> Vision is envisaged as the medium that calibrates the relation between man and monster. While it is the gaze of the Gorgons that threatens Perseus, Odysseus and his men triumph over the Cyclops by depriving him of eyesight.

<sup>22</sup> For the full argument, see Grethlein 2016, 90–94 – along with Grethlein 2015, 204–205. On Gorgons and their gaze in vase-painting, see Howe 1954; Vernant 1990, 115–117; Frontisi-Ducroux 1995, 71–74; Mack 2002. For further literature, see Neer 2002, 43, n. 56.

The ornamental dimension also suggests additional ways of relating the scenes and protagonists to each other. Highlighted by the added white, Odysseus stands in a line with Athena. As I have just pointed out, this alignment makes little sense in the narrative logic of the scenes: Odysseus assaults Polyphemus; Athena assists Perseus. The same white colour that singles out Odysseus as the most prominent attacker<sup>23</sup> elevates Athena above the scene and possibly marks her as divine. That being said, the iconic linking of Odysseus to Athena abounds in significance beyond the featured scenes. It alerts the spectator to the fact that Odysseus is another protégé of Athena. In the *Odyssey*, she is his closest ally and plays a crucial role in his *nostos*. Far from pressing a single interpretation, the formal structuring of the representing surface opens up various avenues to the meaning of the scenes represented.

Located on the vessel's shoulder and sandwiched between two mythological scenes, the generic motif of the boar and lion is clearly not the main focus of the Eleusis amphora. Nonetheless, the ornamental structure, of which the middle scene forms a part, puts the animal fight into a dialogue with the pursuit of Perseus and the blinding of Polyphemus. The triangle pattern as well as the colour underscore that the clash of the two unequal animals parallels the encounters of heroes with monsters. Since the lion covers the space over Athena as well as Perseus, the picture seems to match the scene below more closely than that above, where the same space is inhabited by the opponents Odysseus and Polyphemus. While the white head of the lion continues the colouring of Athena, the black body puts the lion in a line with Perseus. The juxtaposition, however, is not that neat. The hatching covering the lion's muzzle is similar to the patterns on the Gorgons' faces, thus establishing an iconographic link across party lines.

The interaction of the animal scene with the blinding of Polyphemus may be less obvious, but it is thought-provoking if one is willing to bring Homer into play. Of course, Archaic vase-paintings ought not to be approached as illustrations of literary texts.<sup>24</sup> Picture and text are two different representational media that follow their own logic and can operate independently from each other. This, however, should not prevent us from interpreting pictorial representations against the backdrop of textual accounts. Here, the juxtaposition effected by the ornamental structure provides, to some extent, an iconic analogue to the comparison of heroes with both boars and lions in epic similes.<sup>25</sup> In the *Iliad*, Odysseus himself is once compared with a boar (*Il.* 11.414). The Eleusis amphora suggests the same comparison in that Odysseus and

<sup>23</sup> Osborne 1998, 60, suggests a more pronounced interpretation: 'Is this just to make him different, or does it stand for the way Odysseus' threat was not visible to the Cyclops?'

<sup>24</sup> See, e.g., Squire 2009, 122–139 (along with Squire's discussion of the 'Euphorbus Plate' in this volume).

<sup>25</sup> For a simile that has a boar face a lion, see *Il.* 16.823–826. On the relation between epic similes and animal friezes, see recently Winkler-Horacek 2015, 312–317.

his men come from the left like the boar. If we view the picture in the light of the Homeric account, this interpretation is corroborated by the fact that Polyphemus is compared with a 'lion reared in the hills' when he eats a couple of Odysseus' companions, 'without leaving anything, entrails, flesh and marrowy bones alike' (*Od.* 9.292–293). Seen thus, the animal picture drives home that, like the boar, Odysseus confronts a physically superior opponent.

If, however, the beholder's eye follows the colours, then the contrary assignment is more plausible: light Odysseus to light lion. The pairing with the animal that is likely to win the duel may gesture to Odysseus' final triumph over the Cyclops. More poignantly, like the lion, Odysseus once confronted a boar in the Caledonian hunt (*Od.* 19.392–466). This is only an association, but one with a famous story and capable of instigating far-reaching questions. A comparison of the blinding of a drunk Cyclops in a cave with the courage of facing a wild boar inevitably makes one ponder on the heroic status of Odysseus. The cunning that allows Odysseus to escape from Polyphemus has little to do with the bravery on show in hunt and combat.

To sum up, the Eleusis amphora shows how the shapes and colours of the pictorial marks yield patterns that, independently of their representational value, structure the surface.<sup>26</sup> While belonging to the level of the representing medium and not that of the represented scene, this ornamental structure contributes to the meaning of the representation. As I have argued, the ornamental structure puts the three figurative pictures into an intense visual dialogue. It invites close comparisons of Odysseus' encounter with Polyphemus, Perseus' adventure with the Gorgons and a generic duel of two wild animals. The repetition of shapes and colours partly underlines analogies, partly throws into relief differences. What is merely pictorial form thus triggers questions that concern the ambiguity of vision as well as the nature of heroic deeds.

## Formulaic diction and meaning in Homer

I will now pair my analysis of the ornamental on the Eleusis amphora with a reading of a passage from the *Odyssey*. The comparison of early Greek art with Homeric poetry is a staple in scholarship. It is, one could say, encapsulated in the *Iliad* itself. As Andrew Sprague Becker and others have shown, the ekphrasis of Achilles' shield sophisticatedly juxtaposes image with text as distinct media of representation.<sup>27</sup> In modern scholarship, Homeric epic has been compared in particular with Geometric

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<sup>26</sup> The repetition of patterns across three separate pictures that are in dialogue with each other makes the Eleusis amphora a particularly compelling illustration of my thesis. However, as the inquiry by Martens 1992, 264–283, shows, there are numerous other vases in which ornamental patterns cut across pictures and ornaments, potentially creating new meaning.

<sup>27</sup> Becker 1990 and 1995; for discussion of the (inter)medial play, see most recently Squire 2013.

art, which advocates of an early date for the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* deem contemporaneous.<sup>28</sup> The repetitiveness of formulaic diction, it is argued, is reminiscent of the ornamental character of Geometric art:<sup>29</sup>

Homeric formulae are, like the motifs of Geometric vases, basically stiff traditional elements, irreducible building blocks of oral epic. A degree of individual remodeling hardly alters their essential nature or reveals much about the poet's personality any more than do the slight variations observable in the different hands of individual vase painters.

Homeric ring-composition, both at the macro- and micro-levels, seems to be the textual equivalent to the symmetries on the friezes of early Greek pottery. Some scholars have even gone so far as to claim that while the structure of the *Iliad* can be paired with the patterns of Geometric vases, the less severe arrangement of the *Odyssey* is in synch with the flowery ornaments of the Orientalising period.<sup>30</sup>

At the same time, it has been noted that the Geometric depictions of such standard scenes as a funeral cortège with unidentified individuals are a far cry from the vivid account of specific scenes in the *Iliad* (or the *Odyssey*).<sup>31</sup> For comparisons that focus on motifs instead of structure, later pottery has proven more fruitful. In a series of articles, Anne Mackay teases out parallels between Homer and black-figured Archaic vase-painting.<sup>32</sup> Discussing various aspects, notably innovation, symmetry and the significance of individual objects, she argues that iconographic attributes and compositions follow the logic which John Miles Foley has ascribed to formulaic diction. For Foley, noun-epithet combinations and other formulae derive their meaning less from the context in which they are used than from the tradition as a whole.<sup>33</sup> The phrase 'swift-footed Achilles', for example, evokes the entire epic tradition in which Achilles is referred to according to this formula. For Mackay, the same 'traditional referentiality' applies to vase-painting: the lion-skin may in some depictions help to identify Heracles, but more generally it conjures up the tradition of Heracles as a manly hero who has slain the Nemean lion and braved numerous other adventures. The same argument can be made for full-blown scenes such as the warrior's departure. Here, the strongly conventionalised composition makes the spectator view the motif against the backdrop of the iconographic tradition.

In the eyes of Mackay, the parallel between vase-painting and epic bespeaks an oral culture: 'Orality is not merely a feature peculiar to orally composed "texts", but

<sup>28</sup> See e. g. Hampe 1936, 1952; Notopoulos 1957; Whitman 1958; Andrae and Flashar 1977 with more bibliography on 230, n. 23; Lewis 1981.

<sup>29</sup> Whitman 1958, 91.

<sup>30</sup> Andrae and Flashar 1977. See also Whitman 1958, 100, 285–309.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Notopoulos 1957, 74.

<sup>32</sup> Mackay 1993, 1995, 1996, 2002.

<sup>33</sup> Foley 1991.

is rather a way of thinking, a way of looking at the world.’<sup>34</sup> There is a sort of oral mentality which is predicated on a distinct temporality. Unlike ‘our “modern” sense of the linear progression of time’, it privileges ‘a concept of simultaneity’: ‘The formulaic phrases and iconographic elements that evoke a supra-contextual or even meta-textual reception on the part of hearer and viewer cannot by their very nature fulfill the modern expectation of a contextually logical, linear narrative progression.’<sup>35</sup>

Now while taking up the comparison of textual with pictorial formulae, my own approach comes with a shift of parameters. Whereas Mackay discusses iconographic motifs, the ornamental, the concern of this paper, is constituted by the repetition of forms and colours with no regard for their representational value. Besides moving the focus from the represented object to the medium of representation, I also replace Mackay’s diachronic view with a synchronic perspective. Drawing on Foley’s notion of ‘traditional referentiality’, Mackay views depictions against the backdrop of earlier versions of the same motif. In contrast, my analysis targets repetition within a single picture. I would like to show that just as patterns in the pictorial plain bleed into the meaning of the represented object, the repetition of formulae in epic poetry can be semantically charged. For this, I shall cast a quick look at the theory of formulae in Homer, then give an illustrating example from the *Odyssey* and finally elaborate on the comparison of text with image.

As first spelt out by Milman Parry, Homeric epic, like the songs of guslars that Parry recorded in Serbo-Croatia, consists largely of formulaic diction.<sup>36</sup> Formulae are ready-made phrases that the bard inherits from tradition. They serve mnemonic functions: only the use of formulae, stabilised through metre, permits the bard to perform such lengthy narratives as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The smallest and most striking formulae are noun-epithet combinations, for example ‘swift-footed Achilles’. That said, the construction of entire scenes can be formulaic.<sup>37</sup> The descriptions of such activities as arming, arrival and sacrifice not only draw on formulae, but are themselves highly formalised. They follow a more or less fixed sequence of steps that, depending on the significance of the individual act, can be extended or abbreviated.

Viewing formulae primarily as an aid to versification, Parry and the first generation of his disciples took little interest in their semantic value or even negated it. As Adam Parry notes in the introduction to the edition of his father’s papers, Milman Parry ‘seemed to believe that the ornamental epithet had virtually no meaning at all: it was a sort of noble or heroic padding’.<sup>38</sup> This position still echoes in Whitman’s above-quoted reference to formulae as ‘basically stiff traditional elements’. However,

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<sup>34</sup> Mackay 1995, 302.

<sup>35</sup> Mackay 1993, 110.

<sup>36</sup> Parry 1971. For surveys of later theory, see Edwards 1986, 1988.

<sup>37</sup> On ‘typische Szenen’, see already Arend 1933. For a survey, see Edwards 1992.

<sup>38</sup> A. Parry in M. Parry 1971, lv, n. 2.

genesis and meaning are two different aspects of poetry that ought not to be pitted against each other. Formulaic diction can be a technical means of composition and simultaneously carry semantic significance. In fact, oralists after Parry have demonstrated how the repetition of formulae artfully establishes links between individual episodes and thereby contributes to their meaning.<sup>39</sup> Taking meaning into account has allowed oral analysis to shed some of its sterility.

An example from the same story as the Homeric scene on the Eleusis amphora may illustrate this. Blinded by Odysseus and his comrades, Polyphemus rages, but is unable to catch his opponents. At the same time, Odysseus and his men are still shut in the cave. In order to escape, Odysseus has to come up with another stratagem. He binds his men under sheep and he himself clings to the fleece of the leader of the herd. The next morning, when the herd rushes out to the pasture, Polyphemus feels over the backs of his animals, but ‘this, clueless as he was, he did not grasp, that they [i. e. Odysseus and his comrades] had been fastened under the chests of the wool-fleeced sheep’ (τὸ δὲ νήπιος οὐκ ἐνόησεν, | ὥς οἱ ὑπ’ εἰροτόκων οἴων στέρνοισι δέδεντο, *Od.* 9.442–443).

The phrase οὐκ ἐνόησα/εν/αν is a formula that occurs at the end of hexameters in five other passages in the *Odyssey*.<sup>40</sup> In one case, the repetition becomes a marked echo as not only the formula, but also the preceding phrase is taken up. At the beginning of Book 22, the suitors are lingering in the *megaron* without weapons when Odysseus, under the alias of the beggar, commences his bloody revenge with shooting Antinous. The suitors assume that he killed their peer unintentionally, but ‘this, clueless as they were, they did not grasp, that for all of them the ropes of their demise had been fastened’ (τὸ δὲ νήπιοι οὐκ ἐνόησαν, | ὥς δὴ σφιν καὶ πᾶσιν ὀλέθρου πείρατ’ ἐφῆπτο, 22.32–33). The re-use of the half-line from Book 9 is further highlighted by the subsequent line, which in both cases closes with a verb denoting binding in the pluperfect passive (δέδεντο – ἐφῆπτο).

The pointed reworking of formulaic language invites a comparison of the two scenes.<sup>41</sup> The parallel cluelessness of Polyphemus and suitors indicates a manifold set of parallels and reversals. Odysseus, once trapped and exposed to the brute force of the Cyclops in the cave, has himself now trapped opponents without weapons in his own home. Unlike Polyphemus, however, he will not let them escape. The literal binding that allowed him to triumph over the imprisoning monster has now become the metaphorical fastening of the fate of those imprisoned. The suitors, cast in Odysseus’ previous role, are not unlike Odysseus in that they have entered into some-

<sup>39</sup> For a survey of the different approaches to formulaic diction and meaning, see Edwards 1988, 24–42. Most recently, see Bakker 2013, 157–169.

<sup>40</sup> In addition to *Od.* 9.442, see *Od.* 2.122; 7.39, 299; 11.62; 22.32. See also *Il.* 16.789 and 9.537 (where, however, it occurs in a different metrical position).

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Bakker 2013, 71–72.



body's home in order to take his food supplies. At the same time, their alignment with Polyphemus through the verbal echo of his cluelessness is highly apt. Not only do the suitors share with him the fate of being duped by Odysseus, but like Polyphemus they are accused of breaching the laws of hospitality.

The juxtaposition of the two scenes, driven by what Bakker calls 'interformularity', allows for multiple readings.<sup>42</sup> It highlights the reversal of Odysseus' fate: mostly a victim and barely managing to protect his life against various aggressors, he has now himself become the aggressor. The reverberation unites such diverse opponents as the monstrous Polyphemus and hybrid aristocrats. No matter whom Odysseus confronts, he is able to pull a trick and outwit his adversary. At the same time, the parallels between the scenes also trigger discomfiting questions. Is Odysseus all that different from Polyphemus?<sup>43</sup> Like the Cyclops, he kills defenceless opponents. The comparison of Polyphemus with a lion, quoted above, echoes uncannily in a simile describing Odysseus after the slaughter of the suitors: 'spattered over with gore and battle filth, like a lion who has been feeding on an ox of the fields, and goes off covered with blood, all his chest and his flanks on either side bloody, a terrible thing to look in the face' (*Od.* 22.402–405). Odysseus devours the suitors only metaphorically, but nonetheless the evocation of the Cyclops is disquieting. Besides casting a critical light on the manner in which Odysseus slaughters the suitors, it may also challenge his legitimisation. Did Odysseus not commit a similar crime as the suitors when he invaded the cave of the Cyclops in order to steal his cattle?

For my purposes, it is crucial that such far-reaching questions are triggered by the pointed repetition of formulaic diction. This fact yields a thought-provoking parallel to vase-painting: in both cases, repetition endows a formal element with semantic weight. There are of course differences: formulae always denote something; the ornamental can be non-figurative. While exactly the same formula gets repeated in Homer, it may be controversial what qualifies as a pictorial pattern. These differences are due to the different representational systems, language being a semiotic system, painting a perceptual mode of presentation.<sup>44</sup> If one acknowledges this difference, it appears possible to compare patterns that structure the pictorial plain and formulaic diction as two formal elements defined by repetition. As we have seen, pointed repetition makes both contribute to the meaning of the representation. Just as the triangle

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<sup>42</sup> Bakker 2013.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Bakker 2013, 53–73, along with Grethlein 2017a, 213–227 for such an interpretation; cf. Grethlein 2017b, which probes the Achillean foil that contributes to the ambiguity of Odysseus' comportment in the execution of the suitors.

<sup>44</sup> Even theoreticians like Nelson Goodman (cf. Goodman 1968), who try to grasp pictorial representation as a semiotic system, have to allow for crucial differences. Syntactic and semantic 'density', as well as the greater number of design properties with representational relevance, make the denotation of pictorial symbol systems much more complex than the signification of the notational symbol systems of language.

pattern on the Eleusis amphora reinforces the juxtaposition of the three figurative friezes, the reworking of formulaic material has Odysseus' escape from the cave and the murder of the suitors shed light on each other. In both cases, the repetition of formal elements generates meaning through comparison.

The same factors seem to regulate the semantic force that formal elements in picture and narrative can have. Not every repetition of a pictorial pattern or formulaic phrase is semantically charged. Just think of the formulaic verse about when 'the young Dawn appeared again with her rosy fingers', which occurs again and again in the *Odyssey*, or regard the ornamental depiction of vegetation on the Eleusis amphora. In order to grade the semantic significance of formulaic diction, Egbert Bakker proposes an 'interformularity scale': 'the more restricted an expression, the more specific the context in which it is uttered, and the higher the point at which it can be placed on the scale'.<sup>45</sup> Both points singled out by Bakker equally apply to pictorial patterns: the more a form is used, the less significant it is. It would, for example, make little sense to consider the repetition of straight lines on the Eleusis amphora. Even the triangle is a rather common form, but its significance gains force from the contextual parallels at different levels: in the three figurative friezes it is legs that form triangles. The similar motifs of the three pictures also make it easy to follow up the ornamental parallel: violent confrontations and, in two pictures more specifically, the encounter of man vs. monster.

Pictures and narratives differ in their modes of representation, which have been compared in a long-standing paragone. This difference notwithstanding, the semantic quality of the ornamental in vase-painting is paralleled by the use of formulaic diction in Homeric epic. In both cases, the repetition of formal elements prompts the comparison of scenes, thereby recasting their meaning. Juxtaposed with other scenes, be it the chase of Perseus or the slaughter of the suitors, the blinding of Polyphemos appears in a new light. The juxtaposition also raises larger questions, including, for example, that of heroic comportment. Not every repetition of patterns and diction has such semantic repercussions, however. The capacity to generate meaning depends on how pointed the repetition is.

## The ornamental in context

As a final step, I would like to ponder the extent to which the ornamental is shaped by a specific cultural context (introducing a theme to which Richard Neer returns in his chapter in this volume). As proposed by Bonne and developed further here, the ornamental appears as a transhistorical category. It defines a salient aspect of the logic

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<sup>45</sup> Bakker 2013, 159.

of pictures in general. Any picture represents through a medium of which we remain aware when we see in it the represented object. Wollheim finds it impossible to pinpoint what it is that triggers the process of 'seeing-in', but he has no doubts about its phenomenological character.<sup>46</sup> Across epochs and cultures, beholders, while seeing the object represented in pictures, simultaneously take in the patterns in the pictorial plain.

Something similar can be said about repetition and literature. In Jakobson's famous formulation, poeticity is premised on 'the projection of the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection to the axis of combination'.<sup>47</sup> The principle of equivalence normally governs the selection of one word over another. In literary texts, however, it also governs the combination of words. Words are, for instance, put together because of their equivalence in sound and thereby yield sequences that are rhythmic, alliterative etc. These formal repetitions create equations and are thereby semantically active. A rhyme for example lets us compare the rhyming words and their sentences with each other, as the formal equivalence makes us expect a semantic correspondence.

Jakobson's definition of poeticity is by no means confined to poetry; it also applies to prose texts. In poetic texts, though, poeticity tends to be particularly high. This highlights the gradual nature of poeticity. My test case, Homeric epic, drives home that the density of formal repetitions is also culturally conditioned. The formulaic diction that endows Homer with such a high degree of poeticity in the terms of Jakobson is, as comparative evidence shows, an oral feature. Poeticity may be a transhistorical category of literary texts, and yet its degree and specific form is defined by such cultural factors as orality. Genre, which is key to poeticity, is itself a strongly cultural category.

What about vase-painting? Not only the Eleusis amphora, but Greek vases in general, if in various degrees and ways, are strongly ornamental. Mackay envisages the iconic 'traditional referentiality' as an oral feature. Whether or not this is convincing – after all, schemata seem to be crucial to our perception of pictures in general<sup>48</sup> – the ornamental quality of Greek vase-painting is better explained along different lines. While paralleling the semantic significance of formulaic diction, the ornamentality of vase-painting has different roots. Here I will touch on the specific medium of pictorial representation and its peculiar spatial logic.

It is important to keep in mind that the carriers of the pictures discussed here is not a neutral ground, but variously shaped vessels which are used for storing, drinking, mixing etc. In adorning vessels, which have various functions independent of the

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<sup>46</sup> Wollheim 1987, 46.

<sup>47</sup> Jakobson 1990 (first published in 1956).

<sup>48</sup> E.g. Gombrich 1960.

pictures, vase-painting is decorative.<sup>49</sup> The decorative character of vase-painting is most conspicuous on Late Geometric vases whose ornaments seem to follow the form of the vessel.<sup>50</sup> It is still felt though in later vase-painting. There seems to be an *amor pleni* that prevents the painter from leaving too much empty space. A strong sense of symmetry is also felt in much vase-painting of later periods. The function of decorating a vessel clearly fosters the ornamental quality of vase-painting, as patterns are highly appropriate to the idea of decoration.

A second point that adds force to the ornamental dimension of vase-painting is its specific spatial logic, which Nikolaus Dietrich has subjected to a piercing analysis. Stones, trees and walls, Dietrich shows, are used to depict settings, but do not yield a full-blown pictorial space:<sup>51</sup>

Although places can play an important role in a picture, they are without impact on the spatiality of the image. Places in Attic vase-painting lack spatial quality: their relevance is confined to characterising actions and figures (which, however, can be crucial to the understanding of the image).

As much as Greek vase-painters were interested in mimetic depictions, they showed little interest in making the pictorial field a window into a specific spatial setting.

Let me suggest that both points are linked to each other. The insignificance of represented space, I think, is rooted in the decorative character of the painting. The more present the carrier is with its function, the less it lends itself to becoming a transparent window. The decorative character of vase-painting conflicts with the idea of a pictorial carrier that disappears behind its representation. Instead of being embedded in a represented space, figures on vases interact directly with the space of the vase. The Eleusis amphora is a case in point. Polyphemus is propped against one of the handles which frame the blinding scene on the left and right. In the same vein, we find such objects as shields leaning against the pictorial frame on numerous vases, for example, on the famous Exekias amphora showing Ajax and Achilles playing dice (Fig. 3.5). Other vases show objects hanging from the top as if the rim of the vessel were part of the picture (e. g. Fig. 3.6).<sup>52</sup> In all these cases, the carrier is somehow present for the represented object. The presence of the vessel that comes to the fore

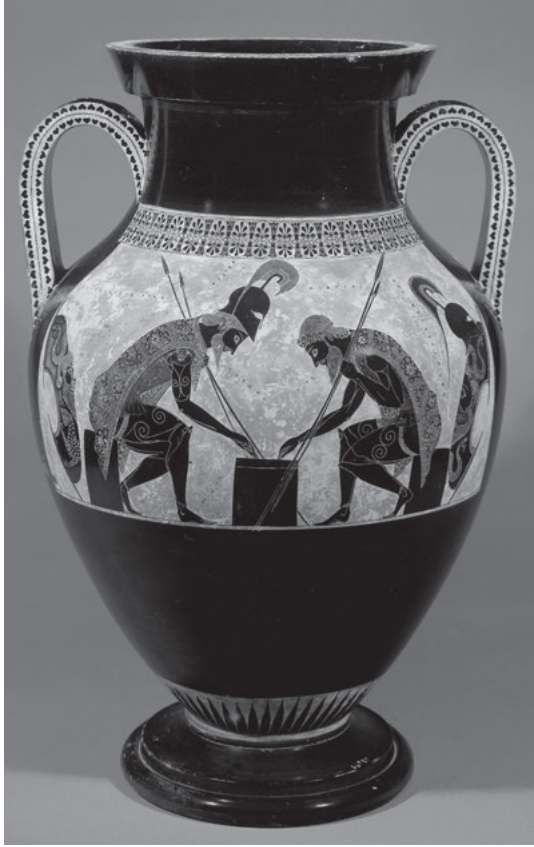
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<sup>49</sup> This very general characterisation of the decorative is developed in the context of Greek architecture in Hölscher's chapter in this volume.

<sup>50</sup> Martens 1992, 67–75.

<sup>51</sup> Dietrich 2010, 98 (my translation): 'Doch auch wenn Orte gelegentlich eine wichtige Rolle in einem Bild einnehmen können, haben sie keinerlei Auswirkungen auf die Räumlichkeit des Bildes. Die Orte in der attischen Vasenmalerei haben keinerlei räumliche Qualität: Damit liegt ihre Bedeutung bloß mehr in der (freilich manchmal für das Verständnis des Bildes entscheidenden) Charakterisierung von Handlungen und Figuren.'

<sup>52</sup> For discussion, see Dietrich 2010, 115–116. On the dependence of figural decoration on the form of the ceramic carrier, see also Kéi's chapter in this volume.



**Fig. 3.5:** Attic black-figure amphora signed by Exekias, showing Achilles and Ajax playing dice, c. 540 BC. Vatican, Musei Vaticani.



**Fig. 3.6:** Attic red-figure kylix associated with Douris, c. 525–475 BC. Athens, National Archaeological Museum.

in such depictions ties in with a prominent role of the ornamental which refers to the representing medium.

Any picture, no matter the medium, no matter the epoch, structures the space of its carrier in some way. The more patterns this structuring features, the stronger the picture's ornamental dimension becomes. The ornamentality of Greek vase-painting is noteworthy. Ornaments are pervasive whether inside or outside the pictorial representation. Figurative compositions often reveal strong symmetries. The strong ornamental dimension of vase-painting is an expression of a mode of pictorial representation in which the carrier is highly present. Accordingly, ancient vase-painters did not strive to represent pictorial space, but had their figures interact directly with the pictorial field. The ornamental is a category of pictures in general, but as the example of Greek vase-painting shows, it gains its specific appearance from distinct conventions of representation. Far from invariable, the ornamental is shaped by cultures of picturing the world.

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Annette Haug

## Ornament und Design: Attisch geometrische Figuralgefäße und Gefäße mit plastischem Dekor\*

Vases in the shape of figures, parts of figures, and occasionally objects were popular throughout the history of Greek pottery. They encourage us to look at them not strictly as containers but rather as creations that have many points of reference, particularly to natural life.<sup>1</sup>

Aus einer ontologischen Perspektive lässt sich das Bild über seine ikonische Differenz<sup>2</sup> bestimmen, d. h. als ein ‚Mehr an Sinn‘.<sup>3</sup> Ausgehend von einer solchen Definition ergeben sich zentrale analytische Kategorien für das Bild:<sup>4</sup> die Bildgrenze, das Verhältnis von Figur und Grund, die semantische ‚Dichte‘ und die Bildsyntax. Ornamente sind in Bezug auf diese Kategorien häufig als ‚Gegenüber‘ des Bildes aufgefasst worden: (1) Sie verfügen meist über keine eigene ‚Grenze‘ (Rahmung), fungieren vielmehr selbst häufig als Rahmen. (2) Sie zeichnen sich durch eine größere Nähe zum Grund, also auch durch eine größere Flächigkeit aus. (3) Die Semantik tritt hinter der Ästhetik zurück.<sup>5</sup> (4) Sie verfügen über eine stärker geometrisierte, symmetrisierte Ordnungsstruktur. Gerade in Bezug auf diese Kategorien zeigt sich aber, dass Bilder und Ornamente damit spielen, diese Bestimmungen zu unterlaufen, zu invertieren und damit das Verhältnis von Bild und Ornament neu – jenseits einer ontologischen Festlegung – zu bestimmen. Die visuellen Ausprägungen des Bild-Ornament-Verhältnisses sind dabei hochgradig zeitspezifisch: Jede Gesellschaft findet einen ihr eigenen Modus, Bild und Ornament aufeinander zu beziehen.

Das Verhältnis von Bild und Ornament lässt sich allerdings nicht nur vom Bild, sondern auch vom Ornament her beschreiben. Aus dieser Perspektive kann das Ornamentale als generatives und ordnendes Prinzip, als „Grundform des Entwickelns von

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1 Mertens 2010, 59.

2 So Boehm 1978, 118–132; vgl. Boehm 2011; diese konzeptionelle, theoretische Festlegung des Bildbegriffs hat freilich ihrerseits einen spezifischen historischen Ort; zur kulturellen Gebundenheit der Bilddefinition siehe Bruhn 2009, 11–16.

3 Ausführlich zu den einführenden Überlegungen Haug 2015.

4 Siehe ausführlich zur Bestimmung von Bild und Ornament Haug 2015 mit Literatur; aus verschiedenen Perspektiven erörtert: Beyer und Spies 2012. In diesem Band siehe insbesondere: Squire, 3–22; Neer, 203–209; Platt, 241–247; Barham.

5 Trilling 2001, 6 bestimmt die Funktion von Ornament darin, dass sie „visual pleasure“ herstellen.

Formen aus Formen“ beschrieben werden.<sup>6</sup> Auch diese ontologische Festlegung steht aber einer spielerischen Infragestellung durch die Ornamente selbst offen.

Die Überlegungen erhalten eine entscheidende Erweiterung, wenn Bild und Ornament nicht nur in ihrer ‚malerischen‘, d.h. flächigen Dimension begriffen werden, sondern auch die ‚taktische‘, d.h. plastische Dimension Berücksichtigung findet.<sup>7</sup> Dies gilt für Plastik/Skulptur mit einem hohen ikonischen Potential, aber auch für Funktionsobjekte mit einem hohen praktischem Nutzen, um die es im Folgenden gehen soll: figürlich-plastische Gefäße (Figurinen-Gefäße)<sup>8</sup> und Gefäße mit Appliken-dekor.<sup>9</sup> Zu ihrer ästhetischen (sinnlich erfahrbaren) und semantischen (gesellschaftlich erfahrbaren) Funktion kommt eine praktische (körperlich erfahrbare) Funktion hinzu.<sup>10</sup> Die *Formqualität* dreidimensionaler Objekte lässt sich als „Design“ beschreiben.<sup>11</sup> Die zuvor entwickelten Aspekte, die die Bild-Ornament-Relation charakterisieren, nehmen sich in Bezug auf dreidimensionale Designobjekte deutlich anders aus.

(1) Dreidimensionale Objekte bedürfen keiner Grenzmarkierung, keines Rahmens, der zwischen Objekt und Betrachtterraum tritt.<sup>12</sup> Ihre Grenze ist der umgebende Raum selbst, der die Bedingungen ihrer Betrachtung festlegt und zugleich die Modi ihrer Realisierung determiniert (etwa Standflächen bei Gefäßen). Nur im Sonderfall wird eine explizite Grenzmarkierung dreidimensionaler Objekte gewählt – dann nämlich, wenn sie durch einen Sockel aus ihrer Umgebung ‚herausgehoben‘ werden. Die Bild-

6 Luhmann 1995, 193; zur Verortung von Luhmanns Ornamentbegriff innerhalb der Architekturtheorie siehe Dürfeld 2008; allgemeiner zum Ornamentbegriff im Diskurs der Moderne die Beiträge in Franke und Paetzold 1996; vgl. dazu auch Haug 2014. In diesem Band: Platt, 242–244.

7 Eine Oppositionsbildung von plastisch (taktisch/nahsichtig) versus malerisch (optisch/fernsichtig) ist von Riegl 1966, 287–291 in die Diskussion eingeführt worden.

8 Mit diesem Terminus etwa Williams 1976 für Lekythen in Figurinenform des 4. Jh. v. Chr.

9 Für spätere Epochen lässt sich als weitere Gruppe jene der Reliefgefäße benennen; siehe Jeammet 2014, 120.

10 Zu dieser Kategorisierung von Design in eine funktionale Benutzerebene, eine ästhetische Betrachterebene und eine semantische (bzw. symbolische) Besitzerebene: Heufler 2004, 24.

11 So wenig es für die Antike berechtigt ist, von ‚Kunst‘ zu sprechen (siehe in diesem Band Hölcher, 62–63), so wenig ist, streng genommen, der Begriff ‚Design‘ am Platz. Er wird hier dennoch eingeführt, um prägnant auf ein Phänomen zu verweisen: die plastische Gestaltung der Dingwelt. In diesem Sinn auch die Begriffsbestimmung bei Suckow 2006, 78: „Design ist der allgemeine Begriff für eine praktische, gestaltende Tätigkeit, deren Ziel es ist, im Prozess der Produktion von Gebrauchsgütern diesen eine gestalthafte Erscheinung zu geben“. Historisch betrachtet wird der Begriff aber erst sehr viel spezifischer verwendet. Seit der Renaissance, dann v.a. seit der Industrialisierung hat der Begriff eine Zuspitzung erfahren, die über die allgemeine Bestimmung deutlich hinausgeht – siehe S. 79: „Sowohl im italienischen *disegno*, im französischen *dessein* und schließlich auch im englischen *(to) design* kristallisiert sich zwischen dem 14. und 18. Jh. ein Begriffsverständnis heraus, das über das ursprüngliche ‚(be)zeichnen‘ hinaus die Bedeutung von ‚Muster‘, ‚Plan‘, ‚Entwurf‘ annimmt.“ Populär wurde der Begriff insbesondere im Zuge der industriellen Fertigung von Gebrauchsgütern.

12 So für Bilder Beyer 2008, 19–21.

haftigkeit (bzw. Skulpturalität) wird durch dieses Mittel gesteigert, es ist aber keine notwendige Bedingung.

(2) Im Objekt-Design ist der Figur-Grund-Kontrast neu zu definieren. Die flächige Definition des Ornamentalen über seine Nähe zum Grund, mithin über seine Flächigkeit,<sup>13</sup> ist im Design hinfällig. Und doch kann der Figur-Grund-Kontrast zum Tragen kommen, kann doch ein ‚Ornament‘ als plastischer Besatz additiv zu einer ‚Grundform‘ hinzutreten. Allerdings ist das Ornamentale nicht ausschließlich über seinen additiven Charakter zu bestimmen. Es kann ebenso auch in die Form selbst eingeschrieben sein und so als formimmanentes Gestaltungsprinzip wirksam werden.

(3) Auch dreidimensionale Objekte können auf Bedeutungen verweisen,<sup>14</sup> wobei sich im Sinne der semiotischen Theorie verschiedene Referenzebenen von Zeichen (Ikon, Index, Symbol) unterscheiden lassen, die jeweils durch den Betrachter hergestellt werden.<sup>15</sup> Eine *indexikalische* Referenz verweist im Falle des Designs unmittelbar auf den Gebrauch der Objekte, dieser Aspekt korrespondiert in der designsemiotischen Terminologie mit der sog. Anzeichen- oder Anzeigefunktion. ‚Anzeichen‘ sind also „auf die praktischen Funktionen eines Produkts [bezogen], das heißt sie visualisieren dessen technische Funktionen oder sie erläutern dessen Handhabung bzw. Bedienung“. Dinge (bzw. ‚Dingzeichen‘) „zeigen also eine mögliche Verwendung ihrer selbst an“,<sup>16</sup> und damit fordern Designobjekte auch konkrete Handhabungen (Gesten, Haltungen) durch den Menschen ein.<sup>17</sup> Eine *ikonische* Referenz weist über das Design hinaus auf einen Horizont außerhalb der Form. Die *symbolische* Referenz ordnet Designformen in ihren konventionellen, gesellschaftlichen Sinnzusammenhang ein. Objekte stehen durch ihre Einbindung in menschliche Handlungen (und Gesten) sowie durch ihren Bezug auf räumliche Konfigurationen in spezifischen Diskurszusammenhängen, aus denen sich wiederum gesellschaftliche Wert- und Sinn-

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**13** Riegl 1893 definiert das Ornament als ‚Muster auf Grund‘. Aus dieser Erkenntnis der strukturbildenden Relation von Muster und Grund entwickelte Nordenfalk 1934, 262 das Strukturgesetz, dass „die relative Gegenständlichkeit eines ornamentalen Musters und seine relative Bindung an die materielle Grundfläche in umgekehrtem Verhältnis zueinander stehen“. Je stilisierter also eine Ornamentform, desto enger ist das Ornament auf den Träger bezogen, je gegenständlicher, desto freier verhält sich das Ornament zur Trägerfläche.

**14** Üblicherweise unterscheidet die Forschung zur Produktsprache hier nur zwischen Anzeiger- bzw. Anzeichenfunktion (s. u.) und Symbolfunktion, etwa Gros 1983; Bürdek 1991, 225; Heufler 2004, 33–34; mit Rekurs auf die semiotische Theorie bei Charles Sanders Peirce scheint mir eine zusätzliche Kategorie, die des Ikonischen, einzuführen zu sein; siehe im Folgenden.

**15** Hier wird folglich nicht von ontologisch verfassten Referenzbeziehungen, sondern von kulturell konstruierten ausgegangen.

**16** In dieser Weise für Architektur formuliert bei Gleitner 2014, 8; siehe aber bereits Noack 1988, 31: „Ein Designgegenstand [...] ist gegenständliche Repräsentation seines Gebrauchs.“

**17** Bürdek 1991, 217. Allerdings können einzelne Aspekte der Anzeichenfunktion auch als ikonisch gelten, siehe Steffen 2000, 24. Zugleich ist in diesem Aspekt die Zeichenbedeutung (Semantik) unmittelbar auf den Zeichengebrauch (Pragmatik) bezogen.

zuschreibungen generieren (Semioseprozesse).<sup>18</sup> Alle Objekte sind, so betrachtet, in verschiedenartige Referenzzusammenhänge eingebunden.<sup>19</sup>

Die Bildhaftigkeit der gestalteten Form (Design) bleibt aber üblicherweise schwach. Zwar sind Designobjekten Referenzoptionen eingeschrieben, diese werden jedoch kaum zu komplexen Inhalten bzw. Narrativen verdichtet. Der bildhafte Charakter ist dadurch stark zurückgenommen, das Design ist primär formalen Ordnungsprinzipien unterworfen, mithin ‚ornamental‘.

(4) Designobjekte besitzen eine Ordnungsstruktur (Syntax), die sich häufig auf Prinzipien der Symmetrie zurückführen lässt. In der Designdebatte wird dieser Ordnungsaspekt als ästhetische Funktion von Objekten verhandelt.<sup>20</sup> Gerade beim Design lassen sich Strukturen der Repetition oder Spiegelung noch weniger als bei Bildern auf die Gegensätze von Bildhaftem und Ornamentalem festlegen.

(5) Im Falle von Designobjekten ist mit Blick auf die Bild-Ornament-Relation auch die praktische Funktion der Objekte in Rechnung zu stellen.<sup>21</sup> In der Handhabung sind figürliche oder auch ornamentale Elemente Teil des greifbaren Objekts.

Es zeigt sich, dass bei Designobjekten Bildhaftigkeit und Ornamentalität noch konkreter aufeinander bezogen sind, als dies bei zweidimensionalen Darstellungen der Fall ist. Designobjekte besitzen aber immer auch eine Oberfläche, und diese Oberfläche steht einer visuell-flächigen Differenzierung offen: im Hinblick auf ihre Materialität, ihre Oberflächentextur und insbesondere auf ihre Oberflächengestaltung. Zweidimensionale und dreidimensionale Gestalteffekte werden unmittelbar aufeinander bezogen.<sup>22</sup> Die Objektoberfläche wird zum Grund der Gestaltung, zum „Ort, an

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**18** Bürdek 2013, 19.

**19** Anders Krippendorf 2006, 274, der ein „nonrepresentational concept of meaning“ jenseits einer ontologischen Differenz von Sein/Welt und Zeichen einfordern möchte. Zwar ist ihm darin Recht zu geben, dass Designobjekte keineswegs als Repräsentationen wahrgenommen werden müssen, dennoch ist eine solche Wahrnehmung bewusst, halbbewusst oder unbewusst möglich. Siehe Noack 1988, 32: „[Die Semiotik] wird [...] der Tatsache gerecht, dass Dinge oder Eigenschaften von Dingen auch dann Gegenstände von Interpretationen werden können, wenn sie nicht in kommunikativer Absicht hervorgebracht wurden, evtl. auch überhaupt nicht künstlich erzeugt wurden“. Krippenbergs Einwände gegen die Semiotik scheinen mir zu kurz zu greifen. Dies gilt insbesondere auch für seinen Hinweis, die Semiotik würde das menschliche Handeln nicht adäquat integrieren.

**20** Heufler 2004, 37; Mareis 2014, 96. Es wäre zu reflektieren, inwieweit sich Ästhetik auf Ordnung reduzieren lässt.

**21** Im Horizont der Funktionalismus-Debatte ist diese praktische Funktion absolut gesetzt worden, weshalb die Postmoderne einen „semiotisch ausdifferenzierten Funktionsbegriff“ (Mareis 2014, 96–101) einforderte. Auch Semantik lässt sich freilich als Funktion begreifen. Im Rahmen einer Differenzierung von Wirkaspekten lassen sich diese verschiedenen Seiten von ‚Funktion‘ aber wieder auftrennen.

**22** Trilling 2001, 62–69 beschreibt diese wechselseitige Bezugnahme als Charakteristikum des Ornaments: „Most of the world’s ornament was designed for some specific context, and cannot be appreciated fully unless we consider its relation to the functional form it adorns [...]. Functional and ornamen-

dem Sinn entsteht“.<sup>23</sup> Der Dekor kann auf das Objekt Bezug nehmen, der Form untergeordnet sein, indem er die praktische Funktion, die semantische Bedeutung oder die ästhetischen Qualitäten expliziert. Er kann die Formqualität des Objekts aber auch negieren, indem er auf eine Bezugnahme verzichtet und eine neue Rezeptionsebene schafft. Die Komplexität der Verschränkung von Bild und Ornament nimmt dadurch noch einmal zu.

## Forschungsgeschichte

Figuralgefäße der geometrischen Zeit haben vornehmlich in Einzelartikeln, aber auch in verschiedenen Monographien Beachtung gefunden.<sup>24</sup> In Bezug auf die hier verfolgte Problemstellung hat sich die Forschung mit drei Hauptfragen befasst: mit der Funktionalität der Gefäße, mit dem Verhältnis von gemaltem ‚Ornament‘ und plastischer Form und mit symbolischen Bedeutungen.

Mit Blick auf die Funktionalität hat Martin Guggisberg ganz zu Recht darauf hingewiesen, dass im Einzelfall schwer zu entscheiden ist, ob Figuralkeramik als Gefäß genutzt wurde oder nicht. In Bezug auf die frühe Tierkeramik benennt er zwei definitorische Kriterien für eine Gefäßnutzung: die Existenz einer Ein- bzw. Ausgussvorrichtung und die Existenz von Henkeln.<sup>25</sup> Tatsächlich weisen darüber hinaus einige weitere Objekte Öffnungen auf, über die Gefäße befüllt werden konnten, allerdings mögen sie auch auf technische Notwendigkeiten (im Rahmen des Brennvorgangs) zurückzuführen sein. Eine scharfe Trennung zwischen Funktionsgefäß und afunktionaler Figuralkeramik ist folglich formal kaum möglich. Für korinthische Tiergefäße konnten Gaschromatographie und Massenspektrometrie nachweisen, dass diese – unabhängig von dem jeweils dargestellten Tier – zur Aufbewahrung von Duftstoffen Verwendung fanden.<sup>26</sup> Eine entsprechende Untersuchung wäre auch für das inhaltlich breite Spektrum des frühen attischen Horizonts interessant. Vorläufig kann hier im Folgenden allein eine Differenzierung in ein ‚Mehr‘ an semantischer Funktion oder einem ‚Mehr‘ an praktischem Nutzen vorgenommen werden.

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tal form are almost indistinguishable, not because they look the same but because we are physically unable to step back and see the interior as a formal unit to which ornament has been added“.

**23** Boehm und Burioni 2012, 64. Snowdin und Howard 1996, 9–12 verweisen auf die Funktion von Ornament als *ornamentum corporis*. Sie gehen vom Schmuck des menschlichen Körpers aus, ihre Beobachtungen lassen sich jedoch auch auf Gefäße als Körper übertragen. Der Dekor dient hier, ähnlich wie Körperschmuck, der sozialen (ästhetischen, semantischen, funktionalen) Aufwertung.

**24** Die frühe Figuralkeramik ist berücksichtigt bei Maximova 1927, sie steht im Mittelpunkt bei Ducat 1966; Guggisberg 1996; Böhm 2014; hinzu kommt eine bedeutende Anzahl an Beiträgen, die sich mit den Figuralgefäßen des 4. Jh. in Athen und Unteritalien befassen.

**25** Guggisberg 1996, 19–20.

**26** Ergebnisse zusammengefasst bei Böhm 2014, 165–168.

Die Frage nach dem Verhältnis von gemaltem ‚Ornament‘ und plastischer Gestalt wird in verschiedenen Beiträgen immer wieder angerissen,<sup>27</sup> eine systematische Studie, auf die sich die nachfolgende Forschung zumeist bezieht, geht auf Nikolaus Himmelmann zurück.<sup>28</sup> Er kommt zu dem Ergebnis, dass das geometrische Ornament verschiedene Grade an Gegenständlichkeit (mithin: an Ikonizität) besitzt.<sup>29</sup> Am Beispiel von geometrischen Terrakottapferden zeigt er, dass die Bemalung mit Ornamentbändern auf tatsächliche Rüstelemente Bezug nimmt, etwa Lepadnon und Satteldücke (s. u.).<sup>30</sup> Himmelmann trifft die wichtige Feststellung, dass sich die mimetische Bedeutung eines visuellen Elements (oft erst) durch seine kontextuelle Einbettung ergibt, während demselben Element in anderen Kontexten andere Referenzen eingeschrieben werden können. Allerdings erklären sich, wie sich zeigen wird, nicht alle auf die Pferdekörper gemalten Elemente als ikonische Referenzen. Oder allgemeiner: Anders als Himmelmann annimmt, haben nicht alle Ornamente eine figürliche (z. B. vegetabile) Grundbedeutung.<sup>31</sup> Es ist einerseits die Existenz von selbstreferentiellen, nicht-zeichenhaften Elementen in Rechnung zu stellen, andererseits die Existenz von Dekorelementen, die ikonisch auf ein Drittes verweisen. Im Falle eines plastischen Pferdes, das einen Dipylonschild auf dem Körper trägt (Heidelberg, Inv. G 55), ist m. E. daher nicht, wie Himmelmann annimmt, im wörtlichen Sinn von einer Brandmarke, sondern vom Verweis auf ein Streitpferd auszugehen.

Während die Überlegungen zur ikonischen Dimension von Figuralgefäßen und ihrer Ornamentik in der Forschung kaum vertieft wurden, sind Überlegungen zur Symbolik sehr viel zahlreicher. Ein Großteil der Forschung hat ausgehend von der Beobachtung, dass viele Figuralgefäße im Grabkult Verwendung gefunden haben, auf eine funeralsymbolische Deutung geschlossen, die dann im Hinblick auf einzelne Objektgruppen spezifiziert wurde: Tonschuhe etwa als Ausrüstung für die Reise ins Jenseits,<sup>32</sup> Granatäpfel als Symbole für Leben und Tod,<sup>33</sup> Vögel als Symbole für die Seele des Toten. Insbesondere die einflussreiche Arbeit von M. I. Maximova hat diese Deutung strapaziert.<sup>34</sup> Solche symbolischen Deutungen verloren auch dann nicht an Einfluss, als deutlich wurde, dass Figuralgefäße ebenso aus sakralen Kontexten und

<sup>27</sup> Etwa Guggisberg 1996; in Bezug auf Einzelfälle beobachtet bei Böhm 2014.

<sup>28</sup> Himmelmann 1968; erneut Himmelmann 2005.

<sup>29</sup> Kritisch zu seiner pflanzlichen Deutung geometrischer Formen: Haug 2015; für die hier verfolgte Frage nach dem Verhältnis von plastischem Objekt und zweidimensionalem Dekor spielt dies jedoch keine Rolle.

<sup>30</sup> Himmelmann 1968, 320–322.

<sup>31</sup> Himmelmann 1968, bes. 3; vgl. kritisch Haug 2015, 27.

<sup>32</sup> Poulsen 1905, 30–31; Maximova 1927, 29–30: „On les déposait dans la tombe avec le mort afin de lui faciliter le passage dans l'autre monde.“

<sup>33</sup> Siehe ausführlich Jacobsthal 1956, 187–200; Muthmann 1982; erneut etwa Langdon 1993, 93.

<sup>34</sup> Maximova 1927, 20–21.

Siedlungshorizonten bekannt sind.<sup>35</sup> Grundsätzlich geht es hier um die Frage, inwieweit der Fundkontext Rückschlüsse auf Deutungen zulässt. Dies hatte die strukturalistische Forschung mit Herbert Hoffmann emphatisch bejaht.<sup>36</sup> Tatsächlich wird man nicht in Abrede stellen, dass sich die Bedeutung von Objekten im Horizont spezifischer Handlungssituationen aktualisiert und spezifiziert. Schon Humphrey Payne und Elena Walter-Karydi, jüngst auch Stephanie Böhm, haben aber zu Recht darauf hingewiesen, dass dies nicht Anlass zu freien Spekulationen über funerar- oder sakralsymbolische, apotropäische, chthonische, magische oder rituelle ‚Auffassungen‘ geben kann. Solange Objekte ihre Existenz nicht einem dezidiert funerareren Zweck verdanken, ist ihre Bedeutung zunächst einmal von ihren lebensweltlichen Funktionen und Sinnzuweisungen ausgehend zu diskutieren.<sup>37</sup> Insbesondere für Alltagsgegenstände wie die erwähnten Schuhe, die aufgrund ihres Auftretens in Kindergräbern mit einer bestimmten Altersstufe assoziiert gewesen sein mögen, bietet sich eine solche Leseweise an.<sup>38</sup> Für den Horizont der Tierwelt lassen sich kulturspezifische Sinnzuweisungen insbesondere durch die Rekonstruktion des Diskursrahmens greifen, in den sie eingebettet sind. Prägnant ist dieser etwa in frühen Gleichnissen zu greifen, wie sie in den homerischen Epen formuliert sind. Einzelnen Tieren wird hier beispielsweise besondere Kraft und Stärke zugesprochen, Qualitäten, die sie mit den Helden teilen.<sup>39</sup>

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**35** Eine kontextuelle Betrachtung bei Ducat 1966, 170, der deshalb über verschiedene symbolische Deutungsoptionen spekuliert; sehr ausführlich zu den frühen Kontexten von Tierkeramik Guggisberg 1996, der daran anschließend dennoch ebenfalls symbolische Deutungen vorschlägt (Guggisberg 1996, 317, 355, 367); zu einem Objekt aus einem Siedlungskontext: submykenisches Stierrhyton in Heidelberg, Inv. T 69, das im Siedlungskontext am Südhang der Akropolis gefunden wurde; Otto 1980, 12; zu den funerareren wie sakralen Kontexten von Granatäpfeln: Charitonides 1960.

**36** Hoffmann 1980.

**37** Siehe bereits Payne 1931, 172 Anm. 1; Ducat 1966, 169–170; Walter-Karydi 1985, 8; Böhm 2014; gegen eine a priori funerärsymbolische Bedeutung von Vögeln, siehe etwa auch ausführlich Haug 2015, 64–65.

**38** Mit dieser Argumentation Walter-Karydi 1985, 8; vgl. auch Weiß 1995, 29–37 mit Schriftquellen und Verweis auf Vasenbilder des 6. und 5. Jh.; aus der Beobachtung, dass solche Stiefel v. a. in Gräbern junger Menschen vorkommen, hat man daher vielleicht zu Recht auf eine altersspezifische Tracht geschlossen; so hat man eine Verbindung mit den Brautschuhem vorgeschlagen, wie sie bei (dem deutlich später lebenden) Hesychius erwähnt sind; ausgehend von Exemplaren aus dem früheisenzeitlichen Heiligtum von Korinth, darunter auch zwei attische Importe, Morgan 1999, 336–338; mit einem Durchgang durch Stiefelmodelle aller Zeiten Haentjens 2002. Langdon 2008, 136 schließt aus ihrem Vorkommen in Kindergräbern (bzw. Mädchengräbern), dass es sich um eine Kinderkleidung handle, die mit der Heirat aufgegeben worden sei: „Such offerings can be understood as symbolically completing the deceased’s preparations for marriage“. Ihr visuelles Argument für diese Deutung ist allerdings ein sehr viel späteres Votivrelief des 4. Jh.

**39** Mit dieser Lesart Böhm 2014, bes. 171–175. Sie geht allerdings wiederum über die primären Qualitäten hinaus (im Falle der Eule etwa Scharfsichtigkeit), um sie als Symbol für die „Brücke zur anderen Welt bzw. unsichtbaren Welt“ aufzufassen. Meines Erachtens sehr viel plausibler wäre es, die Sphäre der Tiere im antiken Sinn von jener der Menschen her zu denken (Asty/Chora/Eschatia), siehe Haug

## Gefäße zwischen Selbstreferenz und Fremdreferenz

Üblicherweise verweist ein Gefäß zunächst einmal auf sich selbst.<sup>40</sup> Eine Amphora (z. B. Athen, NM 21366, Abb. 4.6) etwa folgt einer spezifischen, typologisch festgelegten Form, sie ist identisch mit ihrem Design. Zugleich konnotiert sie dabei aber auch ein Spektrum von kulturellen Vorstellungen (*Bedeutungen*), die sich aus ihrem Funktionsspektrum ergeben: Vorratshaltung, der Genuss von Wein oder die Nutzung von Öl. Hinzu kommen sekundäre Verwendungsoptionen der Gefäße – im Athen des 8. Jh. etwa die Markierung von Männergräbern durch Halsamphoren oder der rituelle Gebrauch von Amphoren.<sup>41</sup> Die Form ist damit zugleich selbstreferentiell und symbolisch aufgeladen. Ähnlich komplex nimmt sich der auf den Gefäßen aufgebraute Dekor aus, der zu dem Gefäßdesign in Beziehung treten kann. Vielfach ist schon darauf hingewiesen worden, dass der Dekor häufig Zonen des Gefäßes akzentuiert, die durch die Gefäßform selbst herausgehoben sind: die Bauchzone ebenso wie die Henkelzone. Dort, wo es sich nicht allein um nicht-gegenständlich-ornamentalen, sondern figürlichen Dekor handelt, tritt dieser in ein komplexes Verhältnis zu den kulturellen, durch die Form konnotierten Vorstellungen. Im geometrischen Athen finden sich bestimmte Themen mit besonderer Häufigkeit auf bestimmten Gefäßformen: Tanzdarstellungen etwa besonders häufig auf Hydrien.<sup>42</sup>

Bereits im Horizont des geometrischen Athen, insbesondere im 8. Jh., ist mit der visuellen Gestaltung der Gefäßform (Formdesign) in vielfältiger Weise gespielt worden. So wird bei einigen Gefäßen der selbstreferentielle Bezug durch die Formgebung selbst in Frage gestellt. Dies gilt für die schon in protogeometrischer Zeit auftretenden Stapelgefäße.<sup>43</sup> Im Falle eines Gefäßes in Heidelberg (Inv. G 14, Abb. 4.1) ist auf die übliche Skyphosform ein zweiter Skyphos aufgesetzt und mit einem breiten Rand versehen worden. Diese Verdopplung ergibt im Hinblick auf die Gefäßfunktion keinen Sinn, im Gegenteil, der konkrete Gebrauch wird dadurch beeinträchtigt.<sup>44</sup>

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(in Vorbereitung); siehe zur kulturellen Logik von Tieren auch ausführlich Winkler-Horaček 2000, 222–234; 2011, 118–121; 2015.

**40** Im Sinne der semiotischen Theorie ist hier noch nicht von Zeichenhaftigkeit bzw. Repräsentation zu sprechen.

**41** Siehe zu letzterem Aspekt Bron 2013.

**42** Siehe systematisch zum Verhältnis von Gefäßform und Dekor Haug 2012, 468–483.

**43** Zu den frühen Beispielen Muskalla 2002, 9 Anm. 67; ein besonders extremes Beispiel ist ein Ring aus zehn miteinander verbundenen Aryballoi aus Theben, die nebeneinander, nicht gestapelt, realisiert sind (Berlin, SM 3331).

**44** Die von Noble 1968, 371 und erneut von Langdon 1993, 96 in Bezug auf einen dreifachen Skyphos im Tampa Museum of Art, Joseph Veach Noble Collection (86.20) vorgeschlagene Bezeichnung als ‚Trick Vase‘ hat wenig explanative Kraft, da nicht logisch erklärt werden kann, wer eigentlich ‚getäuscht‘ werden soll (der Tote, der dieses Gefäß als Beigabe erhält, wohl kaum).





**Abb. 4.1:** Doppelskyphos, protogeometrisch. Heidelberg, Antikenmuseum der Universität.

Für den Betrachter sind zwei Rezeptionsformen möglich. Das Doppelgefäß kann als Illusion eines Geschirrssets aufgefasst werden,<sup>45</sup> statt einem Gefäß werden zwei funktionstüchtige Gefäße wahrgenommen. Die beiden Teilgefäße lassen sich aber auch jeweils als Bild des anderen, als Spiel mit Bild und Abbild, mithin also als Spiel mit Referentialität und Selbstreferentialität, auffassen. In jedem Fall führt die Formverdopplung zu einer erhöhten Aufmerksamkeit für das Design. Die Gefäßform wird nicht nur semantisch expliziert, sondern auch ästhetisch inszeniert; sie wird zum Ornament. Dieser Effekt wird dadurch unterstrichen, dass die beiden Gefäßteile mit einem identischen gemalten Dekor versehen sind. Dies ist bei manchen Doppelgefäßen der Fall,<sup>46</sup> zwingend ist dies aber nicht. Der Dekor verdoppelter Gefäße kann auch eine Variation einführen und so die Alterität im Sinne einer nicht-identischen Vervielfachung vorführen.<sup>47</sup>

Ab dem späten 9. Jh. treten aber auch Gefäße auf, die auf eine Realität jenseits ihrer eigenen Formgebung und/oder Materialität verweisen.<sup>48</sup> Die Form des Gefäßes wird zur Repräsentation von etwas anderem eingesetzt. Dies gilt beispielsweise für eine Gruppe von Tongefäßen, die einen Korb *repräsentieren*. Im Falle eines Gefäßes in Würzburg (Inv. H 5337) besitzt etwa der geschlossene Korb eine eingedrückte Form, insbesondere die schlaufenförmigen Henkel hängen wie bei einer Tragetasche nach innen durch. Noch expliziter wird die Referenz auf ein anderes Material im Falle eines plastisch durchbrochenen Kalathos in Heidelberg (Inv. G 61.5, Abb. 4.2). Nicht nur die Gefäßform gleicht einem Korb, vielmehr konnotieren auch die aus dem Ton herausgeschnitzten kleinen Dreiecke und Rechtecke das Flechtmuster eines Korbes, ohne dieses im wörtlichen Sinne zu repräsentieren. Erst aufgrund der kontextuellen Verortung werden die geometrischen Einzelformen als Korbmuster gedeutet. Im Falle

<sup>45</sup> So Noble 1968, 371; Muskalla 2002, 9.

<sup>46</sup> Siehe etwa auch Athen, NM 719; München, Antikensammlung 6250.

<sup>47</sup> Etwa im Falle des Doppelskyphos Paris, Louvre CA 1736.

<sup>48</sup> Peirce würde hier von ‚Hypoikonen‘ oder degenerierten Ikonen sprechen (Peirce 1998, § 276).



**Abb. 4.2:** Ornamental durchbrochener Kalathos, spätgeometrisch. Heidelberg, Antikenmuseum der Universität.

des Kalathos ist es das gesamte Tongefäß, das auf eine andere Gefäßform semantisch verweist. Das Gefäß ist, was es nicht ist.<sup>49</sup> Ähnliches gilt beispielsweise auch für ein Gefäß in Gestalt eines Trinkhorns (Boston, MFA 14738).

## Gefäße als Repräsentationen anderer Objekte

Während in den genannten Fällen ein Tongefäß genutzt wurde, um ein anderes Gefäß ‚vorzustellen‘, existieren in geometrischer Zeit aber auch Gefäße, die gegenständliche Objekte repräsentieren, bei denen es sich nicht um Gefäße handelt. In diesen Fällen wird die repräsentativ-semantische Absicht formbestimmend, die Funktion als Gefäß kann in den Hintergrund treten oder ganz aufgegeben werden.

Dazu gehört eine Gruppe von frühgeometrischen tönernen Schuhen bzw. Stiefeln. Paare solcher Stiefel treten in einem Grab auf der Agora, im Grab eines Jugendlichen in der Nekropole der Demetrios-Straße, aber auch im Isis-Grab in Eleusis (Abb. 4.3) auf.<sup>50</sup> Dass Stiefel zum Gegenstand einer plastischen Gestaltung werden, ist bemer-

<sup>49</sup> Künstlerisch gestaltet ist dieses Phänomen in René Magrittes Bild ‚Ceci n’est pas une pipe‘; vgl. Foucault 1974.

<sup>50</sup> Agora Grab D16:3 mit den Stiefelpaaren Athen, Agora P 19249; Athen, P 19250 (Young 1949, Taf. 67.70 mit einer Rekonstruktion des Ledervorbilds); Demetrios-Straße 20 (Deltion 19B [1964] 54 Taf. 49); Mitsaion-Zitroustraße, Grab B (Langdon 2008, 132); Eleusis, Isis-Grab (EphArch 1898, 103, Taf. 4.4); Eleusis, Grab XVII (EphArch 1921, 35); für eine Zusammenstellung, siehe Dohan Morrow 1985, 185 Anm. 1; Weiß 1995, 21–22; Haentjens 2002; Langdon 2008, 132f.; nach Langdon 2008, 130–142 sind sie Teil der Grabausstattung von jungen Mädchen, aus ihrer eigenen Tabelle (S. 132–133) geht jedoch hervor, dass es sich in zwei Fällen um Kindergräber (Demetriosstraße sowie außerattisch: Mitsaion-/



**Abb. 4.3:** Tönernes Paar Schuhe aus dem sog. Isis-Grab, frühgeometrisch. Eleusis, Museum.

kenswert, fehlen in dieser Zeit doch figürliche Darstellungen fast vollständig. Und bei den ersten Menschenbildern des 8. Jh. wird auf die Angabe von Schuhen vollständig verzichtet.<sup>51</sup> Indem die plastisch in Ton modellierten Schuhe aus der materiellen Kultur ihrer Zeit herausragen, sind sie für ihren Kontext signifikant. Wichtig ist aber, dass sie einen zweifachen symbolischen Tausch vollziehen. Es handelt sich gerade nicht um ein funktionstüchtiges Objekt, sondern um ein Miniatur-Double, das mit dem Original nur den visuellen Eindruck, aber gerade nicht die Funktion teilt. Hier sind folglich drei inhaltlich verschiedene Ebenen aufeinander bezogen: der tönerne Hohlkörper, der zumindest theoretisch befüllt werden kann; der lederne Schuh, der visuell vorgestellt wird; und der menschliche Körper, der assoziativ mit dem Schuh verbunden ist. Die breite Sohle ist vom feinen Oberleder abgesetzt, plastisch gestaltet sind auch Zierelemente des Schuhs, selbst die vertikale Naht ist angegeben. Plastisch modellierte ‚Ornamente‘ sind hier folglich mimetisch aufgeladen und lassen sich konkret auf die Gestalt des Schuhs beziehen. Im Ton werden so Eigenschaften des Ledermaterials simuliert. Darüber hinaus dient der Schuh selbst als Träger für eine geometrische Oberflächengestaltung, ohne dass diese mimetisch auf das Objekt Bezug nehmen würde. Der gemalte Dekor ist ornamental, ohne referentielle Bezüge zum Träger.

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Zitroustraße) handelt, das Grab von der Agora mit zwei Stiefelpaaren nur unsicher als weiblich angesprochen werden kann (Agora, D 16:3) und das Eleusiner Grab ohne Angabe bleibt. Die Evidenz für die Verbindung der Stiefel mit Parthenos-Gräbern ist damit mehr als dürftig.

<sup>51</sup> Die Situation ist damit gerade nicht vergleichbar mit späteren Zeugnissen des 6. Jh., die in eine breite Ikonographie des An- und Ausziehens von Schuhen in verschiedenen Kontexten einbindet; vgl. Weiß 1995, 19.

Bei einer weiteren Gruppe von Objekten handelt es sich um Miniaturmodelle von Funktionsobjekten des landwirtschaftlichen Bereichs: Getreidespeicher und Bienenkörbe. Diese verfügen über eine kleine Öffnung, die auf die Öffnung der realen Objekte/Baukörper Bezug nimmt, die aber wohl kaum zur Befüllung der Hohlkörper genutzt worden sein dürfte. Das aufwendigste, zugleich jedoch singuläre Objekt, das sich der Miniaturform ‚Getreidespeicher‘ bedient, ist eine um 850 v. Chr. entstandene Pyxis aus dem Grab einer sehr reich beigesetzten Frau von der Athener Agora (Agora P 27646, Abb. 4.4). Der rechteckige Pyxiskasten fungiert als ‚Unterbau‘, während auf den Pyxisdeckel fünf knospenförmige Getreidespeicher aufgesetzt sind. In diesem Sonderfall tritt eine Gefäßform, die zur Aufbewahrung dient,<sup>52</sup> zu einer Miniaturform in Beziehung, die auf Aufbewahrung im Sinne von Vorratshaltung ‚in großem Stil‘ verweist. Man wird in Bezug auf diese Vorstellung von Thesaurierung an die Performanz von Prestige und Reichtum denken dürfen.<sup>53</sup> Die Miniaturform wird dabei aber nur sehr bedingt visuell spezifiziert. Über einer rechteckigen Öffnung, die unterhalb der Spitze, folglich also im ‚Obergeschoss‘, eingesetzt ist, befindet sich ein kleiner Wulst. In Verbindung mit der Öffnung wird er als Schutzdach lesbar. Sowohl der Pyxiskörper als auch die einzelnen Getreidespeicherformen sind mit komplexen Mäanderformen gefüllt, die von einfacheren geometrischen Formen ‚gerahmt‘ werden. Allein die Spitzen der Getreidespeicher sind dunkel gefirnisst. Ganz offensichtlich wird hier auf die Nutzung des zweidimensionalen Ornaments zur Charakterisierung der Oberflächentextur des repräsentierten Objekts verzichtet. Stattdessen steigern die Mäanderformen den visuellen Aufwand des Objekts, sie sind im selbstständigen Sinn *ornamentum*.

Am weitesten reicht die Semantisierung von Keramik dort, wo sie ihrer Funktion als Gefäß gänzlich beraubt ist und über keine Öffnung verfügt. Dies gilt etwa für eine relativ umfangreiche Gruppe von attisch-geometrischen Granatäpfeln (Abb. 4.5).<sup>54</sup> Es handelt sich also um ‚Tonfrüchte‘.<sup>55</sup> Zwar fungieren sie nicht als Gefäß, doch können sie einen oder mehrere Anschlagkörper besitzen, so dass sie in diesen Fällen als Rasseln anzusprechen sind.<sup>56</sup> Reale Funktion (Rassel) und Repräsentation (Granat-

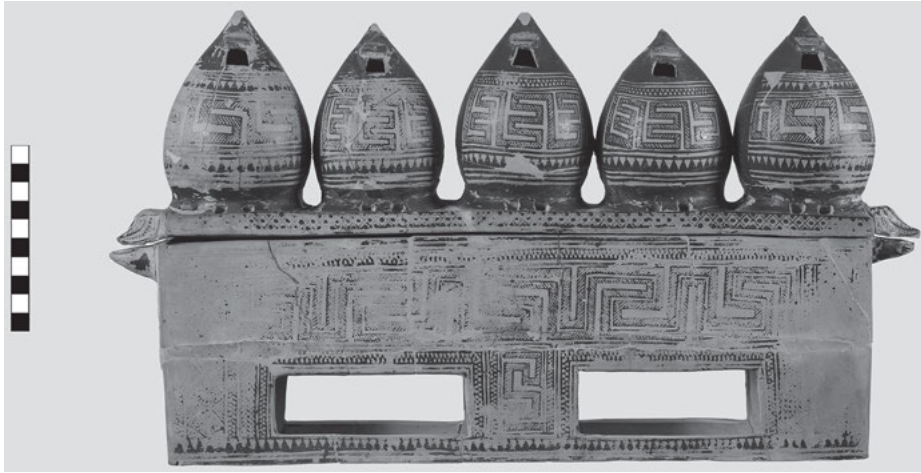
52 Im Rahmen des spätgeometrischen Grabrituals möglicherweise für Speisen – siehe Bohen 1988, 5.

53 Noch konkreter ist vorgeschlagen worden, die Fünffzahl der Speicher auf die soziale Klasse der Pentakosiomedimnoi zu beziehen (Smithson 1968, 96), die allerdings erst mit Solon (und nicht bereits für das 9. Jh. v. Chr.) historisch belegt sind.

54 Sie treten im keramischen Spektrum Athens ab 740 v. Chr. verstärkt auf, siehe Moore 2004, 30; wenige Vorgänger sind bekannt (ein frühgeometrisches Exemplar Athen, Agora P 27028: Immerwahr 1989, 398).

55 Siehe Immerwahr 1989, 406; Beispiel für ein Gefäß mit Öffnung New York, MMA 12.229.8 (siehe Mertens 2010, 59).

56 Buchholz 1987, T 101 weist darauf hin, dass solche Objekte bisweilen aus Kindergräbern stammen und erwägt daher eine Deutung als Spielzeug. Als Rasseln sind solche Gefäße nur dann zu erkennen, wenn die Publikation eigens darauf hinweist; eine Zusammenstellung bei Buchholz. Auf das



**Abb. 4.4:** Pyxis mit fünf Miniaturgetreidespeichern aus reichem Frauengrab von der Athener Agora, um 850 v. Chr. Athen, Agora Museum.

apfel) fallen auseinander. Die Form folgt gerade nicht der Funktion. Zugleich zeigen Durchlochungen an, dass die tönernen Äpfel in einigen Fällen aufgehängt werden konnten, so dass der Wind das Rasselgeräusch ausgelöst haben dürfte. Betrachten wir nun die ikonische Gestalt am Beispiel eines Granatapfels in München (Antikensammlung 5605, Abb. 4.5) etwas näher. An eine Kugelform ist unten eine als Fuß dienende plastische Blüte angesetzt, auf der gegenüberliegenden Seite schließt die ‚Frucht‘ mit einer kleinen Noppe ab. Der aufgemalte Dekor nimmt hier wie auch sonst nicht auf die Textur eines Apfels Bezug. Dies dürfte sicher auch daran liegen, dass eine Apfeltexur zu unspezifisch ist, als dass sie in einem auf Hell-Dunkel-Kontraste festgelegten Dekor hätte umgesetzt werden können. Auch komplexe figürliche Szenen sucht man vergebens. Stattdessen findet sich eine große Zahl an Einzelmotiven, die ein naturhaftes Ambiente assoziieren lassen. Dies gilt besonders häufig, wie auch hier, für Vögel,<sup>57</sup> hinzukommen verschiedene Blattformen.<sup>58</sup> Daneben stehen nicht-ikonische, geometrische Dekorformen.<sup>59</sup> Auf dieser Grundlage bietet es sich an, eine semantische Interferenz zwischen Funktion, plastischer Form und zweidimensionalem Dekor

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hier gezeigte Objekt (Abb. 4.5) trifft eine solche Rasselfunktion zu. Solche Rasseln sind nicht auf die Granatapfelform festgelegt, auch Tierkörper können als Rasseln umgesetzt sein, siehe Buchholz 1987, T 102–103.

**57** Weiterhin: Athen, NM 695; Athen, NM 6873; Berlin, SM 30906; Boston, MFA 03.776; Oxford, Ash. 1934.313; Paris, Louvre CA 1819.

**58** Athen, NM 7400; Paris, Louvre CA 1819; Würzburg, Inv. H 5340.

**59** Brunswick, Bowdoin 15.15; Gießen, Inv. KIII96; Tübingen, Inv. S 101.251. Zum Nebeneinander geometrischer und figürlicher Motive, siehe in diesem Band auch Squire, 3–16; Grethlein, 78; Neer, 215–220.



**Abb. 4.5:** Tönerner Granatapfel, spätgeometrisch. München, Antikensammlung.

anzunehmen: Vögel definieren einen Naturraum, in dem auch Granatapfelbäume zu denken sind, und konkreter noch mag man sich Vögel an Granatäpfeln pickend vorstellen. Doch gerade diese Situation wird gestört durch das Rasselgeräusch, das der tönernen Apfel gewissermaßen unvermittelt von sich gibt. Solche Beziehungen bleiben aber auf einer assoziativen Ebene, sie werden nicht ausformuliert. Und doch entsteht auf dieser assoziativen Ebene ein minimalistisch verfasster Erzählraum. Keine der Objekteigenschaften, weder Form, Funktion noch Bemalung, erlaubt eine darüber hinausweisende Rekonstruktion symbolischer Bedeutungen. Auch zweidimensionale Darstellungen, die Granatäpfel in einem Handlungskontext zeigen, über die sich ein semantischer Rahmen abstecken ließe, fehlen im frühen Athen.<sup>60</sup> Die genannten Assoziationen, die sich aus dem Objekt selbst ergeben, lassen folglich allenfalls eine Verbindung mit Naturhaftigkeit oder Lebendigkeit zu.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Mit Ausnahme vielleicht der Darstellungen von rattle scenes, Musikszenen, bei denen die Musikanten ein Rasselobjekt bewegen, das einer Granatapfelform ähneln mag (Langdon 1993, 95). Hier wäre der Bezugshorizont folglich ein Festkontext.

<sup>61</sup> Als Fruchtbarkeit etwa Moore 2004, 30.

## Zoomorphe Gefäße

Während die bislang diskutierten Gefäße andere Objekte repräsentierten, ist in einigen weiteren Fällen das Gefäß konkret als Körper aufgefasst.<sup>62</sup> Schon frühzeitig rekurren Gefäße auf Tiere oder einzelne Körperteile von Tieren,<sup>63</sup> während in Athen erst im 7. Jh. auch Gefäße hinzutreten, die in Abbeviatur einzelne menschliche Körperteile vorstellen (etwa Kopfgefäße).<sup>64</sup> Im Folgenden liegt der Fokus daher allein auf Tierkeramiken und der Frage, wie sich der Bezug von Bild und Ornament hier ausnimmt.

Ein zoomorpher Bezug kann allein durch die Relation von Gefäßkörper, Henkel und Bemalung aufgerufen werden und dabei wenig explizit bleiben. Im Falle einer Amphora in Athen (Nationalmuseum 21366, Abb. 4.6) ist das Henkelfeld mit zwei konzentrischen Kreiselementen gefüllt, zwischen denen ein spitzer Dreieckshaken sowie eine Rautenkette sitzen. Die Zusammenstellung wirkt wie ein Vogelgesicht, so dass die Henkel, die dieses ‚Gesicht‘ rahmen, als Ohren wahrgenommen werden können. Bedeutung entsteht hier einmal mehr aus dem Zusammenspiel von für sich genommen insignifikanten Elementen. Die sinnhafte Bedeutung wird im genannten Beispiel aber nicht allein in der zweidimensionalen Fläche erzeugt, sondern im Zusammenspiel von zweidimensionalem Dekor und der plastischen Gestalt des Gefäßkörpers. Der Gefäßkörper wird zum Vogelkörper. Gleichzeitig behält aber die Amphora ihre volle Funktionstüchtigkeit, da in das konventionelle plastische Design des Gefäßes nicht eingegriffen wurde.

Sehr viel weiter geht die Modellierung des Gefäßes als Vogelkörper dort, wo die Gefäßform in einer Ähnlichkeitsbeziehung zur Vogelgestalt steht. Dies trifft auf zahlreiche bronze- und eisenzeitliche Gussgefäße (Rhyta) zu,<sup>65</sup> aber auch auf drei aus einem einzigen Grab stammende spätgeometrische Askoi in Vogelform (Kerameikos

<sup>62</sup> Zur Körperhaftigkeit von Gefäßen, siehe auch True 2006, 240.

<sup>63</sup> Maximova 1927, 25 versteht figürliche Gefäße in Tierform in der Mehrzahl als Repräsentationen von Haus- und Jagdtieren, die den Toten im Jenseits umgeben sollen. Vögel hingegen interpretiert sie als Verkörperungen der Seele des Toten (Maximova 1927, 29). Methodisch fundiert lässt sich nur sagen, dass es sich bei den Tieren um solche handelt, die für die Gesellschaft – allerdings aus verschiedenen Gründen – bedeutsam waren. Ein konkreter Bezug einzelner Tiere zum Toten bzw. zum Jenseits bleibt ein Postulat, das methodisch nicht begründbar ist.

<sup>64</sup> Plastische menschliche ‚Idole‘ (etwa Glockenidole) und menschengestaltige Terrakotten, Objekte also ohne Gefäßfunktion, sind schon früher bekannt; vgl. Xagorari 1996. Außerdem ist darauf hinzuweisen, dass in anderen Kontexten Gesichtsgefäße sehr viel älter sind, so etwa die „Gesichtsurnen“ aus Troja II, vgl. Richter 1967.

<sup>65</sup> Otto 1980 mit einer Zusammenstellung (auch anderer Tiergestalten). Sie unterscheidet vier Typen von Tiergefäßen, deren Ausguss meist die Schnauze bildet (S. 7): Typ 1 mit Einguss vor dem Bandhenkel; Typ 2 mit Eingusstülle; Typ 3, bei dem der Einguss von einem Bügelhenkel überspannt ist und Typ 4, bei dem der Einguss hinter dem Bügelhenkel sitzt.





**Abb. 4.6:** Amphora mit ‚ornamentalem‘ Vogelgesicht im Halsfeld, Ende 8. Jh. v. Chr. Athen, Nationalmuseum.

Museum 1350; 1351; 1352, Abb. 4.7).<sup>66</sup> Bei zwei Gefäßen handelt es sich sogar um Zwilingsaskoi, bei denen zwei aneinandergesetzte Gefäßkörper in Gestalt eines Vogelkörpers jeweils auf einem massiven Fuß stehen, an den vier Krallen angesetzt sind. An jedem der beiden Gefäßkörper setzt ein Gefäßhals an, der in eine kleeblattförmige Öffnung mündet. Allein der Gefäßgriff, der den ‚Vogelkopf‘ mit dem Gefäßkörper verbindet, verdichtet die Vogelkonnotation des Gefäßes nicht weiter, sondern kommt als

<sup>66</sup> Athen, Ker. 1351; Athen, Ker. 1350; Athen, Ker. 1352 aus Grab 49, siehe Kübler 1954, 243; siehe auch ein Exemplar in Frankfurt, Liebighaus 519; weiterhin auch ein Vogelaskos aus Marathon; eine Zusammenstellung für den gesamtgriechischen Bereich bei Bouzek 1970, 131.





**Abb. 4.7:** Vogelaskoi aus Grab 49 vom Kerameikos, spätgeometrisch. Athen, Kerameikos Museum.

funktionaler Zusatz hinzu. Mit hohlem Gefäßkörper, Ausguss und Henkel verfügen die Vogelaskoi über alle Elemente, die ein voll funktionstüchtiges Gefäß braucht. Ihre Gestalt dürfte aber insbesondere bei den Doppelaskoi eine konkrete Handhabung geradezu unmöglich gemacht haben. Die Zoomorphisierung (mithin Semantisierung) der Gefäßform schiebt sich vor ihren realen Gebrauch, der durch die figürliche Gestalt erschwert wurde.<sup>67</sup> Die Ornamente, die auf diesen plastischen Vogelkörpern aufgemalt sind, bleiben in ihrem Bezug zum Tier unspezifisch. Auf eine visuelle Differenzierung des Gefieders oder einzelner Körpermerkmale wird verzichtet. Stattdessen entwickeln verschiedene geometrische Muster ein Eigenleben auf der Oberfläche der Vogelkörper.<sup>68</sup> Dabei sind sie aber wiederum auch nicht unabhängig vom Gefäßkörper: Sie differenzieren verschiedene Zonen am Gefäß-Hals, am Gefäß-Körper und am Gefäß-Fuß.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Zosi 2009, 13 beschreibt dieses Phänomen in Bezug auf einen protogeometrischen zyprischen Askos in Athen, NM 29273: „[The vessel] reveals a clear intent to combine practical needs (three legs for stability, a handle for carrying and functional purposes, a hollow ring for mixing libations) with other elements that point to symbolism“.

<sup>68</sup> Himmelmann schließt für einen Tonvogel im Kerameikos aus der ikonischen Referenz eines einzelnen Musters (einem Strichsaum am Halsansatz) auf die Ikonizität aller Ornamente, die solche Tonvögel schmücken. Eine ornamentale Selbstreferentialität schließt er geradezu systematisch aus. Diese scheint mir nicht zulässig, bleibt dies doch mit Blick auf die Ornamentierung der Vögel eine Option, selbst und gerade wenn die Ornamente einzelne Körperteile *ästhetisch* akzentuieren.

<sup>69</sup> In dieser Weise für geometrische Tonvögel auch beobachtet bei Himmelmann 1968, 21; auch Guggisberg 1996, 286 diskutiert das Verhältnis von Ornament und Tierkörper. In mykenischer Zeit hätten Ornamente, so sein Ergebnis, stark deskriptiven Charakter, da sie „zur Charakterisierung des

Am weitesten geht die Zoomorphisierung dann, wenn auf einen Funktionswert als Gefäß wie im Falle der tönernen Granatäpfel vollständig verzichtet wird, so dass man folglich von keramischen Tierplastiken sprechen kann. Bei einem tönernen Vogel vom Kerameikos (Athen, Ker. 1308)<sup>70</sup> steht ein geschwungener Vogelkörper auf zwei kleinen Füßen, anders als bei den Askoi mündet der Hals jedoch nicht in einen offenen Ausguss, sondern in einen plastisch modellierten Vogelkopf.

Vögel sind im geometrischen Athen keineswegs die einzige, aber eine besonders beliebte Tierart, die für die visuelle (zweidimensionale) und taktile (plastische) Durchdringung der Gefäße gewählt wurde. In ihnen weisen die Gefäße über sich selbst hinaus auf einen körperhaften, naturhaften Horizont. Das kulturell geformte Gefäß wird zur raumgreifenden Repräsentation von Naturhaftigkeit. Insbesondere im Falle der Askoi wird die Verschränkung von kulturellem *Gebrauch* und visuellem Verweis auf das Naturhafte besonders konkret greifbar.

## Gefäße mit plastischem Besatz: Griffe und Appliken

Bisher sind verschiedene Optionen vorgeführt worden, wie Gefäße genutzt werden können, um etwas ‚vorzustellen‘, was sie selbst nicht sind. Mithin ging es um das semantische Potential der Gefäßform, um die Verschränkung von Semantik und Ästhetik, Bedeutung und Form (Design). Daneben steht mit dem späten 9. Jh. v. Chr. aber noch eine weitere Option zur Verfügung, wie in das plastische Design von Gefäßen Bedeutung eingeschrieben werden kann: durch semantisch definite ‚Zusätze‘. Dies kann geschehen, indem als Gefäßknauf ein figürliches Objekt verwendet wird, aber auch, indem Figuren/Figurinen auf einzelne Gefäßteile wie den Gefäßrand aufgesetzt werden. Auch diese Strategien können genutzt werden, um auf das Gefäß selbst, auf andere Gefäße, auf andere Objekte oder schließlich auf die Sphäre von Tier und Mensch zu verweisen.

Ein selbstreferentieller Verweis auf die Form des Gefäßes ist dann zu greifen, wenn der Deckelgriff eines Gefäßes als Miniaturgefäß derselben Gefäßform gestaltet wird.<sup>71</sup> Der Deckel besitzt keine ‚Behältnisfunktion‘,<sup>72</sup> er ist Design. Entsprechende Gefäße setzen in Athen um 900 v. Chr. ein.<sup>73</sup> Im Falle der Kanne in Tübingen (Inv. 1236,

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gescheckten Fells, der Vogelfedern, Fischschuppen oder der Stacheln eines Igels“ eingesetzt wurden. In späthmykenischer Zeit sei es zu einer stärkeren Stilisierung gekommen.

<sup>70</sup> Siehe auch Athen, Ker. 1309, beide aus dem Kindergrab 50 im Kerameikos; vgl. Xagorari 1996, 87–88; Otto 1980, 11; Guggisberg 1996, 73 Nr. 226–227.

<sup>71</sup> Entsprechende Deckelgefäße stammen in Athen fast durchgängig aus Grabkontexten – mit Katalog, siehe Muskalla 2002, bes. 10.

<sup>72</sup> Muskalla 2002, 9 spricht von ‚Plastik‘.

<sup>73</sup> Frühestes Exemplar: Athen, Ker. 2135; Muskalla 2002, 7.

Abb. 4.8) handelt es sich um eine Deckelkanne, deren Deckelgriff aus einer Miniaturkanne besteht.<sup>74</sup> Wieder haben wir es visuell mit einer selbstreferentiellen Verdoppelung zu tun, die hier aber mit einer funktionalen Invertierung einhergeht. Während die „Hauptform“ ihre Funktion als Kanne erfüllt, wird der Miniaturform eine neue Funktion als Deckelgriff zugewiesen. Während die großformatige, ‚eigentliche‘ Kanne am Henkel angefasst werden kann, dürfte der Deckel bewegt worden sein, indem dazu die ganze Miniaturkanne angefasst wurde. Trotz identischen formalen Designs unterscheidet sich das Miniaturderivat folglich in funktionaler Hinsicht vom ‚eigentlichen‘ Gefäß und bedient damit auch einen anderen semantischen Horizont. Diese Hierarchisierung wird auch im bemalten Dekor des Gefäßes umgesetzt. Während die eigentliche Kanne mit verschiedenen Metopenfeldern versehen ist, die teils Blattsterne, Mäander, Schachbrettmuster, aber auch figürlichen Dekor tragen, ist der Dekor der Miniaturkanne auf einfache Zickzackmuster beschränkt. Diese Unterscheidung hat sicher praktische Gründe, sie erzielt aber zugleich einen spezifischen visuellen Effekt. Haupt- und Nebenform sind auch hinsichtlich der Komplexität der ornamentalen Form unterschieden.

Bei einer Gruppe von Gefäßen besteht der Deckelgriff aber aus einer Gefäßform, die nicht identisch mit dem Hauptgefäß ist. Der ‚Zusatz‘ weist über die Funktion des Gefäßes selbst hinaus. Eine Kanne in Bochum (Inv. S 1066, Abb. 4.9) ist etwa mit einem Deckel versehen, dessen Griff als Miniaturskyphos gestaltet ist. Indem solch unterschiedliche Gefäßformen bei ein und demselben Objekt aufeinander bezogen werden, wird ein Metadiskurs stimuliert, der es dem Betrachter erlaubt, eine ‚narrative‘ Sequenz zu denken. Die Kanne mag als Weinkanne vorgesehen sein, um beim Symposion die Skyphoi zu füllen. Der ‚ornamentale‘ Zusatz einer figürlich definierten Deckelform ermöglicht folglich eine semantische Verdichtung, die über die Einzelform hinausreicht. Die Hierarchie zwischen Gefäßform und Deckelform wird hier einmal mehr durch eine Unterscheidung in der Komplexität des Dekors eingeführt, besitzt der kleine Skyphos, der als Gefäßdeckel fungiert, doch nur einen sehr einfachen Dekor. Im Falle der Bochumer Kanne treten aber nicht nur Funktionsform und Deckelform in einen Metadiskurs ein, dieser erstreckt sich auch auf die zweidimensionale Darstellung am Gefäßhals. Hier verweist eine Tanzszene auf einen festlichen Kontext, wie er den Rahmen für den Genuss von Wein abgegeben haben mag. Genuss von Wein und Fest/Tanz fügen sich in einen assoziativ aufeinander bezogenen Hand-

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<sup>74</sup> Brann 1960, 413 stellt eine Beziehung zwischen den Mehrfachgefäßen (pot stacks) und Gefäßen mit einem Deckelgriff in Gefäßform her. Tatsächlich ist die Selbstreferentialität auf die Gefäßform (im Falle eines Griffs, der dieselbe Form wie das Hauptgefäß aufweist) in beiden Fällen gegeben, doch es existieren auch wichtige Unterschiede. Bei Mehrfachgefäßen ist ein und dieselbe Form in identischer Größe wiederholt und zu einer neuen Gefäßform zusammengefügt, im Falle figürlicher Griffe handelt es sich um Miniaturformen, die als Deckelgriff zur eigentlichen Form hinzugefügt werden. Zum Miniaturbegriff Muskalla 2002, 4–5. Bei Muskalla ist auch eine ausführliche typologische Zusammenstellung, welche Gefäßformen mit welchen Miniaturformen als Griff kombiniert vorkommen.



**Abb. 4.8:** Kanne, Deckel mit Griff in Kannenform, spätgeometrisch. Tübingen, Museum der Universität, Antikensammlung.

lungsrahmen. Nicht nur dreidimensionale und zweidimensionale Dekorelemente sind so aufeinander bezogen, sondern auch semantisch schwächere, ornamentale Designelemente und semantisch stärkere Bilder.

Deckelgriffe können aber nicht nur auf Gefäßformen rekurren, sondern auch die Gestalt von Tieren annehmen. Der vielleicht bekannteste Fall sind die ab dem späten 9. Jh. im Spektrum attischer Keramik auftretenden Pferdepyxisen. An ihnen lassen sich Himmelmanns Einsichten zur mimetischen Qualität von Ornamenten diskutieren. Im Falle einer Tübinger Pferdepyxis (Inv. 07450, Abb. 4.10) nimmt die Bemalung des Pferdeköpers tatsächlich teilweise auf reale Eigenschaften eines



**Abb. 4.9:** Kanne mit Tanzszene; Deckel mit Griff in Skyphosform, Ende 8. Jh. v. Chr. Bochum, Ruhr-Universität, Antikenmuseum.

Pferdes Bezug. Dies gilt für die Angabe von Ohren, Augen und Mähne, die hier sogar plastisch angedeutet und durch Bemalung zusätzlich akzentuiert sind, aber auch für die Angabe des Zaumzeugs. Andere Elemente allerdings, etwa die senkrechten, mit Punkten akzentuierten Streifen auf den Pferdebeinen, besitzen keine mimetische Referenz.<sup>75</sup> Dennoch sind diese Ornamente nicht frei von einem Bezug auf den Pferdekörper, sie akzentuieren Körperkonturen – im genannten Fall die Vertikale

<sup>75</sup> Bohen 1988, 10–11.



**Abb. 4.10:** Pyxis, Deckel mit Pferdegrieff (Pferdepyxis), Anfang 8. Jh. v. Chr. Tübingen, Museum der Universität, Antikensammlung.

der Beine. Die Bemalung oszilliert folglich zwischen einer semantisch-mimetischen Referenz auf das dargestellte Tier und einer ornamental-ästhetischen Inszenierung desselben. Indem ein oder mehrere Pferde (zumeist drei) als Deckelgriff einer Pyxis genutzt werden, ist der Nutzer des Gefäßes zur haptischen Kontaktaufnahme mit den Tieren gezwungen. Pferde als Prestigegüter der Elite<sup>76</sup> und Pyxiden als Verdinglichung der (elitären) Vorstellung von Thesaurierung werden dadurch konkret aufeinander bezogen. In einzelnen Fällen wird der inhaltliche Bezug zwischen Gefäßkörper und plastischem Deckelgriff aber weiter verdichtet. Auf einer Pferdepyxis in London (BM 1911.416.3) sind in den geometrischen Dekor des Pyxiskörpers vier Radornamente

<sup>76</sup> Pferdezucht als Eliteaktivität diskutiert in Morgan und Whitelaw 1991, 93 und Osborne 1998, 28; vgl. auch Haug (in Vorbereitung).



**Abb. 4.11:** Becher mit Darstellung von Klagefrauen, Klagefrau als plastische Henkel-applike, spätgeometrisch. Paris, Louvre.

eingesetzt. Pferde und Radornamente werden auf diese Weise als assoziativer Verweis auf einen Pferdewagen lesbar.<sup>77</sup>

Noch expliziter wird eine solche Interdependenz dann, wenn plastische Appliken und zweidimensionaler Dekor das Gleiche darstellen. Im Falle eines Bechers in Paris (Louvre CA 1779, Abb. 4.11) ist eine plastisch modellierte Klagefrau an den hoch ausschwingenden Henkel angesetzt. Ihre Beine und ihr Gesäß lehnen gegen den Henkel, der Oberkörper ist leicht nach vorn geneigt, die Arme sind im Klagegestus über dem Kopf zusammengeführt. Auf der Becheroberfläche ist dieses Motiv zu einer handlungsarmen Szene verdichtet: Acht Klagefrauen gehen mit knapp voreinander gesetzten Füßen hintereinander her. Der visuelle ‚Raum‘ der Trauer greift durch die Applike in die Umgebung des Gefäßes aus. So eng der Bezug zwischen zwei- und dreidimensionaler Darstellung hier ausfällt: Die Darstellungsmodi sind nicht identisch. So unterscheidet sich schon die Körperhaltung leicht – bei der Figurine sind die Arme bogenförmig über dem Kopf zusammengeführt, die Beine sind parallel nebeneinander gestellt, während bei den gemalten Klagefrauen die Ellbogen einen spitzen Winkel bilden und die Füße knapp voreinander gesetzt sind. Auch die ‚Ornamentie-

<sup>77</sup> Dazu Himmelmann 1968, 47: „In diesem Beispiel erweist sich das Rad als echter Gegenstand, aber zugleich auch als echtes Ornament.“

rung‘ des Körpers unterscheidet sich: Die gemalten Frauen tragen einen gemusterten Rock, während die Beine der Terrakotte separat angegeben und augenscheinlich nicht bekleidet sind. Auch die Bemalung der Terrakotte nimmt nicht auf Bekleidung Bezug, einzelne Streifen – etwa an den Armen – mögen nur in sehr allgemeinem Sinn als ‚Schmuck des Körpers‘ verständlich sein. Plastische und gemalte Klagefrauen können durch ein vergleichendes Sehen ganz unmittelbar semantisch, aber auch ästhetisch zueinander in Beziehung gesetzt werden. Und doch bleibt der darstellerische Raum getrennt: die plastische Modellierung greift nicht in das Bildfeld ein.

Im Falle einiger plastischer Zusätze von Gefäßen ist dies jedoch anders: Die Bemalung rekurriert ganz unmittelbar auf sie. Dies gilt für die plastischen Schlangen, die häufig auf Gefäßschultern und Gefäßlippen appliziert sind. Sie bewegen sich in einer ornamental gestalteten ‚Umgebung‘.<sup>78</sup> An dieser Stelle soll aber ein anderer, noch weiterreichender Fall zur Sprache kommen: auf das Gefäß aufgesetzte ‚Noppen‘, wie sie besonders häufig in der Schulterzone geometrischer Kannen auftreten. Im Falle einer Oinochoe in Kopenhagen (Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek 3153, Abb. 4.12) ist in dieser Zone ein Jagdfries dargestellt. Ein Mann hat einen Vogel am Hals gepackt, den er offenkundig mit einem kreisförmigen Objekt zu töten gedenkt. Die verbleibende Bildfläche wird von einer Vielzahl von Vögeln gefüllt, die sich von dem Jäger nach rechts hin abkehren. Dadurch ist eine gewisse Nähe zum Tierfries gegeben, die aber schon dadurch aufgehoben wird, dass die Vögel nur zum Teil auf der Standlinie stehen, zum Teil aber auch frei auf der Bildfläche platziert sind. Zwischen ihnen verteilt sich eine große Zahl an Punktrosetten, wie sie häufig für die Repräsentation von blühenden ‚Wiesen‘ eingesetzt wurden. Inmitten dieses ‚Naturraums‘ ragen auf der Frontseite zwei kleine, plastisch gestaltete ‚Noppen‘ aus der Gefäßfläche heraus, die ihrerseits von einem Kreis gefasst sind. Aus dem Darstellungszusammenhang heraus<sup>79</sup> werden sie als Knospen verständlich, die (additiv verfasste) Darstellung des Naturraums erstreckt sich so in die dritte Dimension. Die dem Gefäß additiv hinzugefügten ‚ornamentalen‘ Knospen werden dadurch zu einem konstitutiven Bestandteil des Bildes. Flächige und plastische Gestaltung sind unmittelbar aufeinander bezogen.

<sup>78</sup> Siehe Haug 2015, 71–73.

<sup>79</sup> Dies bedeutet auch, dass nicht alle aufgesetzten ‚Noppen‘ als Blüten aufzufassen sind, in einigen Fällen ist ihre Bedeutung nicht kontextuell spezifiziert. Dies gilt für einen Skyphos in Athen, NM 15310, in dessen ‚Bildfeld‘ ein Mäander platziert ist, der zwei Leerstellen lässt. In diese sind zwei plastische ‚Noppen‘ eingesetzt, die mit einer aufgemalten Spirale versehen sind. Bei (allerdings nur) einer der Noppen ist die Spitze mit einem Punkt versehen. Auf eine semantische Spezifizierung ist verzichtet, so dass der Betrachter auf ein assoziatives Feld verwiesen wird. Da es sich hier wie auch sonst jeweils um ein Paar solcher ‚Noppen‘ handelt, mag der Betrachter an Brüste, mithin an eine Anthropomorphisierung, gedacht haben. Mit dieser Deutung für alle geometrischen ‚Warzengefäße‘ Bouzek 1970, 104–105. Für die geometrische Zeit weist er darauf hin, dass Kannen (die er als weiblich konnotierte Gefäße anspricht), mit solchen Brustwarzen versehen wurden (S. 108). Dass auch Becher und Oinochoen häufig mit solchen Warzen ausgestattet wurden, lässt er unkommentiert.





**Abb. 4.12:** Kanne in Kopenhagen mit plastischen ‚Noppen‘ inmitten eines Jagdfrieses, spätgeometrisch. Kopenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek.

## Schluss

An den verschiedenen Einzelbeispielen lassen sich einige grundsätzliche Einsichten gewinnen. Es hat sich gezeigt, dass die frühen griechischen Objekte keine kulturell verbindliche Hierarchisierung von Funktion, Semantik und Ästhetik vornehmen. Während bei einigen Objekten die Funktionalität im Vordergrund steht, die Form folglich von der Gefäßfunktion geprägt ist, geht bei anderen Gefäßen die Aufladung mit Bedeutung so weit, dass die praktische Nutzung weitgehend oder sogar vollständig in den Hintergrund tritt. Folglich decken die Objekte eine große Bandbreite zwischen (primär) funktionaler Bindung, (primär) semantischer Repräsentation und (primär) ästhetischem Entwurf ab.<sup>80</sup> Auch aus der Welt der frühen Dichter und Denker sind uns keine Normen erhalten, die die Kategorien in ein hierarchisierendes Verhältnis rücken würden.<sup>81</sup>

**80** Mit praktischer Funktion („Gegenstand praktischer Tätigkeit“), Semantik („Gegenstand sozialer Kommunikation“) und Ästhetik („Gegenstand sinnlicher Wahrnehmung“) sind die drei zentralen Kontexte benannt, die für das Design relevant sind, siehe Oehlke 1988, 151.

**81** Ein solcher Diskurs zum Primat des Funktionalen (und damit auch der Materialgerechtigkeit) wird erstmals bei Platon, Hippias Maior geführt; siehe dazu Böhme 1994. Er sollte die Designdebatte der Moderne unter dem Schlagwort „Form follows Function“ nachhaltig prägen – eine Debatte, die in die-

Dieser Umstand hat systematische Konsequenzen für die Relation von Bild und Ornament. Das Ausbleiben einer Hierarchisierung von Funktion und Semantik lässt einer Semantisierung, aber auch Ornamentalisierung von Objekten auf allen Ebenen freien Raum. So wundert es nicht, dass bei den frühgriechischen Objekten Bildhaftigkeit und Ornamentalität eng aufeinander bezogen sind. Dies wird deutlich, greift man die eingangs benannten Parameter noch einmal auf: (1) Grenze, (2) Figur-Grund-Kontrast, (3) Semantik, (4) Syntax und (5) Funktion.

(1) Keines der diskutierten Funktionsobjekte ist durch einen Sockel aus der Alltagswelt herausgehoben. Selbst bei plastischen Terrakotten und figürlichen Bronzen ist eine Standfläche häufig weggelassen. Designobjekte sind dadurch unmittelbarer Bestandteil der Lebenswelt, sie heben sich von dieser strukturell nicht ab. Einen Sonderfall stellen einzelne frühe Terrakotten und Bronzen dar, die eine eigene Standfläche haben. Es sind diese Ausnahmen, die die Entwicklung von bildhaften Skulpturen konzeptionell vorwegnehmen.

(2) Jedem plastischen Design ist das Ornamentale als Entwurfsprinzip inhärent, ein Figur-Grund-Kontrast ist aus dieser Perspektive aufgehoben, die Gefäßform ist identisch mit ihrer Oberfläche. Gerade die frühgriechischen Gefäße spielen jedoch mit dieser Festlegung. Bei den vielen Gefäßen, denen Miniaturgefäße als Deckelgriffe dienen, ist der ornamentale ‚Zusatz‘ zugleich integraler funktionaler Bestandteil. In jenen Fällen, in denen Elemente wie etwa aufgesetzte Schlangen und Noppen zu einer vermeintlichen ‚Grundform‘ hinzutreten, scheint eine Differenzierung auf den ersten Blick einfacher. Doch greifen wir hier mehrere komplexe Verschränkungen. Der additive *Zusatz* – eigentlich ein definitorisches Kriterium des Ornaments<sup>82</sup> – wird vor dem Hintergrund der Figur-Grund-Ordnung zur ‚Figur‘, während das Gefäß selbst als Grund fungiert. Doch indem diese plastischen Appliken ihrerseits in den gemalten zweidimensionalen Dekor der Gefäßoberfläche einbinden, werden sie gewissermaßen in die Fläche, in den ‚Grund‘, mit hineingenommen. In Bezug auf den gemalten Dekor avancieren sie hingegen wiederum zum bildhaften Element einer Dekorzone.

(3) Gefäßformen sind üblicherweise semantisch schwach belegt, im Normalfall verweisen sie auf sich selbst bzw. ihre Nutzung. Allein durch ihre (sozial und räumlich definite) Nutzung binden sie in verschiedene Assoziationshorizonte ein. Die hier

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sem Zuge zugleich die Abschaffung des Ornaments postulierte. Diese funktional orientierte Forderung findet sich bereits bei dem Architekten Henri Labrouste (1801-1875): „[...] la forme, en architecture, doit toujours être appropriée à la fonction qu'on lui destine“. Das Prinzip wird dann bei Gottfried Semper als Prinzip formuliert und in der Chicago School, insbesondere von dem Architekten Louis Sullivan, zum Leitsatz erhoben; vgl. Lambert 1993; Payne 2012, bes. 39. Anfang des 20. Jh. kommt es dadurch zu einer Engführung von Funktionalismus und Ornamentdebatte, etwa bei Adolf Loos: „evolution der kultur ist gleichbedeutend mit dem entfernen des ornaments aus dem gebrauchsgegenstände“ (Loos 1999, erstmals erschienen 1908); siehe dazu auch Mareis 2014, 64–79.

<sup>82</sup> Am prägnantesten konturiert in Sempers Vorstellung von der ‚Bekleidung‘ von Architektur, der er jegliche Form von Bauornamentik zuordnet; siehe etwa Payne 2012, 40–41.

besprochenen Gefäße gehen aber über solch basale Sinnzuweisungen hinaus, und dies in verschiedenerlei Hinsicht: (a) Sie intensivieren die Selbstreferentialität, indem sie mit Bild und Abbild ihrer selbst spielen. (b) Sie geben vor, etwas zu sein, was sie nicht sind. Die Illusion ist aber stark zurückgenommen, stattdessen wird die Differenz zwischen Original und tönernem Imitat explizit ausgestellt. Die Repräsentation kann sich dabei auf sehr verschiedenartige Felder beziehen: andere Gefäße, Objekte, aber auch Tiere. Menschen sind zunächst von solch plastischen Repräsentationsstrategien ausgenommen, erst im 7. Jh. treten figürliche Gefäße in Kopfgestalt auf; (c) durch plastische Zusätze vermag die Gefäßform zusätzlich semantisiert zu werden. Das Ornament fungiert hier als additiver Zusatz zu den Objekten – etwa in Gestalt der plastischen Schlangen oder Noppen, die den Gefäßen aufgesetzt sind. Und zugleich sind sie damit der eigentliche Träger von Bedeutung. (d) Die Bedeutung (mithin die ‚Bildhaftigkeit‘) der Gefäßform kann weiter verdichtet werden, indem sie inhaltlich zum gemalten Dekor in Beziehung tritt. Der so entstehende semantische Raum bindet die Gefäßform in minimalistisch verfasste Erzählmomente ein. (e) Auf einem noch abstrakteren Level lassen sich plastische Gefäße und Gefäße mit aufwendigem plastischem Besatz als soziale Bedeutungsträger auffassen. Prudence Rice geht allgemein davon aus, dass „products with high value, special function, low consumption, or restricted distribution“ als „elite wares“<sup>83</sup> anzusprechen seien. Die meisten Kriterien dürften auf geometrische Figuralgefäße zutreffen: Sie sind technisch aufwendig zu realisieren und weichen optisch wie taktisch deutlich vom Standard der Zeit ab.<sup>84</sup> So ist es zumindest plausibel, dass sie einen gehobenen sozialen Kontext konnotieren. Dieser soziale Rahmen lässt sich aber noch weiter spezifizieren. Zahlreiche der hier diskutierten Objekte treten in Gräbern von Mädchen bzw. jungen Frauen auf.<sup>85</sup> Dies gilt nicht nur für die erwähnten Schuhe, die daher als Trachtelement von Frauen vor der Hochzeit aufgefasst wurden (s. o.), sondern auch für Pferdepyxiden, plastisch modellierte Tiere, Granatäpfel, Modelle von Getreidespeichern sowie für Kalathoi und Körbe. Es liegt daher nahe, dass die Objekte zur materiellen Konstruktion weiblicher Identität genutzt wurden. Die vorausgegangenen Überlegungen würden folglich den Schluss zulassen, dass für einige weiblich konnotierte Objekte auf spezifische visuelle Strategien zurückgegriffen wurde.

(4) Gefäße sind üblicherweise symmetrisch aufgebaut, einzelne Funktionselemente wie Henkel und Ausguss nehmen auf Symmetrieachsen Bezug. Von solch strengen Symmetriebeziehungen nehmen Figuralgefäße mehr oder minder deutlich Abstand. Während die kugelförmigen Granatäpfel relativ streng symmetrisch aufge-

<sup>83</sup> Rice 1987, 203–204; in Bezug auf korinthische Figuralgefäße des 6. Jh. Biers 1994, 512, der dabei allerdings auch Ökonomisierungsprozesse in der Herstellung zum Thema macht. Für die Keramik des 8. Jh. in Athen sind diese aber auszuschließen.

<sup>84</sup> Siehe in diesem Band auch Hölscher, 37–38.

<sup>85</sup> Siehe Langdon 2008, 130–143.

baut sind, wird etwa bei tönernen Schuhen die Symmetrie zugunsten der ikonischen Form aufgegeben. Allerdings wird die Symmetrie durch die paarweise Verwendung der tönernen Schuhe, das Einzelobjekt übergreifend, wieder hergestellt. Ähnliches gilt auch für die Pferde auf Pyxiden, die durch ihre Vervielfältigung Symmetriebeziehungen unterworfen sind. Bei diesen Pferdepyxiden kann der zweidimensionale Dekor eingesetzt werden, um Symmetriebeziehungen zu unterstreichen (etwa im Falle der gleichartig ornamentierten Pferdebeine der Tübinger Pyxis), er kann aber auch Asymmetrien verstärken. Im geometrischen Athen wird von dezidiert asymmetrischen Produkten aber kaum Gebrauch gemacht, ist Symmetrie doch eine Grundkategorie der Gestaltung schlechthin. Zweidimensionale wie dreidimensionale Formen sind in Bezug auf die Syntax folglich stark ‚ornamenthaft‘ aufgefasst.

(5) Im Hinblick auf die Funktion ergibt sich eine Unterscheidung zwischen Figuralgefäßen und Gefäßen mit plastischem Besatz. Erstere können in ihrer Funktionstüchtigkeit stark variieren, stehen doch voll funktionstüchtige Gefäße neben eingeschränkt nutzbaren und überhaupt nicht als Gefäß nutzbaren Objekten. Gefäße mit plastischem Besatz hingegen waren in ihrem Gebrauch nicht oder (etwa im Falle des Bechers mit Klagefrau) nur geringfügig eingeschränkt. Tatsächlich sind Appliken vorrangig dort angebracht, wo sie ‚handhabbar‘ sind – also etwa als Deckelgriffe, oder dort, wo sie die Handhabung nicht stören – etwa Schlangen auf Gefäßschultern oder am Henkel.

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François Lissarrague

## Armure et ornement dans l'imagerie attique

Les représentations de guerriers héroïques sont fort nombreuses dans la céramique attique des 6<sup>e</sup> et 5<sup>e</sup> siècles avant notre ère. C'est un thème privilégié par les peintres qui ont souvent préféré aux batailles collectives le duel entre héros, pas toujours identifiables de façon précise sauf quand une inscription les accompagne.<sup>1</sup> Un des aspects les plus remarquables de ce corpus d'images est l'accent mis par les peintres sur la splendeur des armes, qui redouble la vigueur des corps en action.

Le rapport entre corps et armes est fondamental dans la culture archaïque et l'imagerie lui fait une large place.<sup>2</sup> On sait le rôle que joue la panoplie dans la construction du héros. Les armes d'Achille sont exemplaires de ce phénomène comme on le voit dans l'*Iliade*. La panoplie d'Achille est confiée à Patrocle, qui prend ainsi la place du héros humilié, puis Hector s'en empare, une fois qu'il a tué Patrocle, et se revêt à son tour de cette même armure.<sup>3</sup> La panoplie passe de l'un à l'autre, transférant en quelque sorte l'identité d'Achille sur chacun, à tour de rôle. Cet objet technique, précieux et prestigieux, fait l'objet d'un travail artisanal très poussé; dans le cas du bouclier d'Achille, tel qu'Héphaïstos le forge pour remplacer l'armure confiée à Patrocle, le décor élaboré par le divin forgeron prend à lui seul la dimension d'un monde fort complexe, longuement décrit par Homère qui rivalise ainsi avec Héphaïstos.

On peut comprendre la relation entre armure et ornement de deux manières complémentaires. D'une part l'armure peut être considérée, au delà d'un artefact technique et fonctionnel, comme un ornement du corps guerrier, une forme de *kosmêsis*; d'autre part cette même armure fait l'objet d'une ornementation fort élaborée, aussi bien dans les exemplaires 'réels', connus par l'archéologie, que dans les représentations, qui poussent loin les effets esthétiques dans ce domaine.

On abordera ici successivement ces deux aspects, en s'attardant davantage sur le second à partir de quelques cas exemplaires.

### L'armure comme *kosmêsis*

La panoplie – casque, cuirasse, jambières, bouclier – constitue pour le guerrier un élément indispensable au combat. Sans elle, il est décrit comme *gymnos*, c'est à dire nu, dépouillé. Ce n'est qu'une fois revêtu de sa panoplie que le combattant peut agir, et la perte des armes équivaut à la mort.

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1 Voir dans ce volume Squire, 3–16.

2 Voir Longo 2000, chapitre 12 et Lissarrague 2008.

3 Hom. *Il.* 16.64 (d'Achille à Patrocle); 17.186 (de Patrocle à Hector).



**Fig. 5.1:** Lécythe à fond blanc, avec un guerrier qui se prépare à la bataille, vers 470 av. J.C. New York, Metropolitan Museum (dessin F. Lissarrague).

Les peintres attiques ont souvent focalisé sur le moment où se met en place un corps armé, détaillant la manipulation des éléments qui construisent le corps guerrier. Souvent c'est une femme qui remet au guerrier son casque, son bouclier, parfois son épée. Le paradigme de ce moment est donné par l'épisode où Thétis remet ses armes à son fils Achille.<sup>4</sup> Les éléments de la panoplie sont apportés par les Néréides, qui démultiplient le rôle féminin de la mère, chacune tenant une pièce de l'équipement; ainsi se déploie l'ensemble des objets qui constituent la panoplie. A côté de ce type iconographique fréquent dès les figures noires, on voit se développer, en figures rouges, des scènes plus collectives, où les guerriers s'équipent tout en prenant soin de leur apparence physique, en particulier de leur chevelure. Ainsi sur une hydrie autrefois dans la collection Borowski six guerriers se préparent.<sup>5</sup> L'un d'eux est en train de torsader ses cheveux pour les mettre sous son casque, posé au sol devant lui. Le même geste se retrouve sur un lécythe à fond blanc (Fig. 5.1) présentant la figure isolée d'un guerrier qui s'arme devant un bouclier posé à plat sur le sol et surmonté d'un casque dont la crinière a la forme d'une queue de cheval.<sup>6</sup> La mèche et la crinière se répondent, la tête et le casque sont comme le double l'un de l'autre.

On voit aussi le moment où la cuirasse, ouverte à la façon d'un diptyque, se referme sur la poitrine du guerrier qui s'équipe. Un des exemples les plus anciens figure sur une amphore signée d'Euthymidès (Fig. 5.2).<sup>7</sup> Hector se tient debout entre Priam et Hécube, ainsi que le précisent les inscriptions qui les accompagnent. Le

<sup>4</sup> Lissarrague 2009; pour les figures noires voir Lissarrague 1990; plus généralement Schäfer 1997.

<sup>5</sup> Toronto, Borowski, hydrie à figures rouges, BAPD 452.

<sup>6</sup> New York, Metropolitan Museum 07.286.44, lécythe à fond blanc, BAPD 207730, peintre du lécythe de Yale, ARV<sup>2</sup> 660.71.

<sup>7</sup> Munich, Antikensammlung 2307, amphore à figures rouges, BAPD 200160, ARV<sup>2</sup> 26.1.

fin chiton qui protège la peau, sous la cuirasse, est nettement visible; le plissé de la partie droite du torse est recouvert, du côté gauche, par la cuirasse. En outre les épaulières (*pteryges*) ne sont pas encore rabattues sur la poitrine, et se dressent derrière les omoplates d'Hector, encadrant son visage. En même temps que la cuirasse se referme progressivement sur le torse du guerrier, le casque vient prendre sa place. Il est tendu par Hécube au dessus de l'épaule d'Hector. La calotte du casque ainsi que la crinière débordent au delà du cadre du tableau principal et empiètent sur la frise de palmettes qui limite la partie supérieure de l'image. Euthymidès a même soigneusement réservé une case pour cet objet intrusif; le casque vient ainsi s'intercaler dans la frise de palmettes et fait autant partie de l'équipement du guerrier que du décor du vase.<sup>8</sup>

L'armure comme seconde peau est mise en évidence au moment où on la voit ajustée par le guerrier qui s'équipe: le terme grec qui désigne ce moment, *dunō*, suggère qu'il s'insinue dans l'armure, qu'il plonge dedans, comme pour rejoindre la forme qui lui donnera son aspect définitif face à l'ennemi.<sup>9</sup> Le même geste de fermeture apparaît sur d'autres images, un peu postérieures, avec des variantes; tantôt la cuirasse est ouverte en diptyque,<sup>10</sup> tantôt elle est déjà fermée, mais les épaulières sont encore défaites<sup>11</sup> tantôt enfin une seule épaulière est relevée<sup>12</sup> et le guerrier est parfois engagé dans un mouvement autre, une libation par exemple.<sup>13</sup> Sur la coupe de Sosias à Berlin, Achille soigne Patrocle blessé au bras gauche (Fig. 5.3).<sup>14</sup> Ce dernier a ôté son casque; il a gardé sa cuirasse fermée, mais l'épaulière gauche est relevée. Ici c'est le mouvement inverse qui a lieu; Patrocle desserre l'étau que forme la cuirasse le temps de soigner sa blessure, mais il ne se défait pas de son équipement, sans doute prêt à repartir au combat. Cette série d'images montre l'intérêt des peintres pour le moment de l'ajustement, de la construction du corps armé.

<sup>8</sup> Merci à Nikolaus Dietrich, à qui je dois cette observation.

<sup>9</sup> Par exemple Hom. *Il.* 6.340.

<sup>10</sup> Vienne, Kunsthistorisches Museum 324, coupe à figures rouges, BAPD 205047, ARV<sup>2</sup> 427.3, Douris; Londres, BM E60, coupe à figures rouges, BAPD 205341, ARV<sup>2</sup> 449.7, manière de Douris; ex Toronto, Borowski, coupe à figures rouges, BAPD 205374, ARV<sup>2</sup> 451.3, peintre d'Œdipe.

<sup>11</sup> Bruxelles, Musées Royaux R308, amphore à figures rouges, BAPD 203807, ARV<sup>2</sup> 362.16, peintre de Triptolème.

<sup>12</sup> La Havane, Lagunillas 204, coupe à figures rouges, BAPD 63000.

<sup>13</sup> Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 98.878, hydrie à figures rouges, BAPD 9017571, attribuée par R. Guy au peintre de Goluchow 37, voir Guy 2017, 187–215.

<sup>14</sup> Berlin, Antikensammlung F2278, coupe à figures rouges, BAPD 200108, ARV<sup>2</sup> 21.1, peintre de Sosias.



Fig. 5.2: Amphore à figures rouges, signée Euthymidès, avec Hector entre Priam et Hécube, vers 510 av. J.C. Munich, Antikensammlung (dessin K. Reichhold).

## La *kosmêsis* de l'armure

Si l'on en vient à l'autre aspect du rapport entre arme et ornement, c'est à dire au décor des armes, le dossier est abondant et ne peut être complètement traité ici, faute de place;<sup>15</sup> je me limiterai à quelques exemples notables. Plusieurs peintres, en particulier les Pionniers de la figure rouge, ont souligné la matérialité de l'armure en donnant à la cuirasse une texture écaillée dont ils ont minutieusement traité le détail, recherchant des effets visuels de variété et de *poikilia* qui vont peut être au-delà de ce qui existe dans la réalité matérielle des cuirasses. C'est un effet de texture qui existe, dès l'époque archaïque sur certains vases, en particulier protocorinthiens,<sup>16</sup> et permet d'animer la surface de la poterie; on le rencontre aussi sur une amphore

<sup>15</sup> C'est l'objet d'un travail en cours, traité oralement lors des Sather Lectures de 2014, et que j'espère publier dans un délai raisonnable. Sur le décor floral des armes voir Kéi 2010, 84–97.

<sup>16</sup> Voir Payne 1931, 19–21 et 63, pl. 29,3.



**Fig. 5.3:** Coupe à figures rouges, avec Achille qui soigne Patrocle blessé, vers 500 av. J.C. Berlin, Antikensammlung (dessin K. Reichhold).

attique aujourd'hui à Göttingen.<sup>17</sup> On connaît plusieurs représentations de cuirasses couvertes d'écailles, parfois pointées, qui densifient la surface protectrice et donnent à cette pièce de la panoplie un aspect chatoyant.<sup>18</sup> Parfois le peintre combine plusieurs textures qui accentuent l'effet de *poikilia*: écailles et damiers alternés noir et rouge,<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Göttingen, Universität K 231, Eschbach 2007, 45 pl. 28. Sur l'histoire de ce décor à écailles, voir Payne 1931, 19 note 5 et les remarques de Bulas 1932, 398.

<sup>18</sup> Berlin, Antikensammlung F2278 (supra note 14); Rome, Villa Giulia (ex New York), cratère en calice à figures rouges, BAPD 187, signé Euphronios; Rome, Villa Giulia (ex Hunt), cratère en calice à figures rouges, BAPD 7501, signé Euphronios; Paris, Louvre G197, amphore à figures rouges, BAPD 202176, ARV<sup>2</sup> 238.1, Myson; Agrigente, Museo Archeologico 23, lécythe à figures rouges, BAPD 203170, ARV<sup>2</sup> 308.5, peintre de Terpsalos. L'hydrie du Louvre G179 (BAPD 5758) ne comporte qu'une panoplie, dont les éléments – casque, bouclier, cuirasse – sont couverts d'écailles.

<sup>19</sup> Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 98.878 (supra note 13); Thasos, Musée Archéologique, fragment de cratère en calice à figures rouges, BAPD 200123, ARV<sup>2</sup> 23.6, Phintias; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 97.368, cratère en calice à figures rouges, BAPD 202631, ARV<sup>2</sup> 290.1, peintre de Tyszkiewicz; New York,

ou bien des plaquettes carrées associées à des motifs ornementaux divers.<sup>20</sup> En travaillant ainsi en détail la surface des armes, les peintres leur donnent une sorte d'éclat chromatique et rehaussent les surfaces à la façon d'une ciselure. Ce qu'Exékias fait en incisant de manière très fine le vêtement et les armes d'Achille et d'Ajx, sur l'amphore du Vatican,<sup>21</sup> les Pionniers le font à leur manière en utilisant la ligne en relief pour accrocher la lumière<sup>22</sup> et insister sur la texture des armes. Une telle texture n'est pas sans évoquer l'égide d'Athéna. Ainsi sur le cratère d'Euphronios représentant le combat d'Héraclès contre Kyknos on observe une homologie remarquable entre l'égide d'Athéna et la cuirasse de Kyknos.<sup>23</sup> La coupe de Sosias est caractéristique de cette recherche. La cuirasse de Patrocle est entièrement couverte d'écailles de tailles différentes, plus petites sur la poitrine, plus grandes et marquées d'une ligne interne, sur les épaules, l'abdomen et sur les lambrequins en bas de la cuirasse. Celle d'Achille répond au même modèle, mais les grandes écailles ne sont pas pointées, et les lambrequins sont ornés d'un damier noir et rouge. Le casque d'Achille est également couvert d'écailles. Enfin la cuirasse de Patrocle est traversée horizontalement par deux doubles lignes qui encadrent un méandre typique du décor non pas des armes mais des vases. On voit là un intéressant échange entre décor des armes et décor des vases qui trouve son écho dans la façon dont Sosias a rempli le segment réservé sous la ligne de sol qui porte l'image d'Achille et Patrocle. Une chaîne de trois palmettes remplit cet espace, symétrique du bouclier sur lequel est assis Patrocle.

Il n'y a pas d'exemples conservés de cuirasses à texture écaillée. On peut supposer que certaines cuirasses faites d'éléments articulés n'ont pas survécu. On connaît en revanche des cuirasses décorées d'éléments linéaires qui soulignent l'anatomie du corps qu'elles recouvrent; parfois les lignes musculaires sont traitées comme des serpents qui semblent briser le réalisme anatomique de la cuirasse;<sup>24</sup> le trait anatomique devient une métaphore menaçante de l'agressivité guerrière. Ainsi trouve-t-on sur des cuirasses des serpents pour souligner les pectoraux,<sup>25</sup> sur un casque des ser-

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Metropolitan Museum 10.210.14, cratère à colonnettes à figures rouges, BAPD 206754, *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 585.24, maniériste ancien.

**20** La cuirasse de Memnon sur Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 98.878 (supra note 13); Bruxelles, Musées Royaux R308 (supra note 11).

**21** Vatican, Museo Gregoriano Etrusco 344, amphore à figures noires, BAPD 310395, *ABV* 145.13, signée Exekias.

**22** Sur les effets de reflets produits par les différents types de lignes en figures rouges et leurs conséquences sur la manière de voir le vase et sa décoration figurale, voir Dietrich 2017, 313–314.

**23** Rome, Villa Giulia (ex Hunt): supra note 18. Noter le gorgoneion qui apparaît sur la cuirasse à écailles d'un guerrier en partance: Ferrare, Museo Nazionale di Spina 42685, cratère à volutes, BAPD 207282, *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 628.1, peintre de Chicago.

**24** Encore une fois, je dois cette observation à Nikolaus Dietrich (lors d'un exposé oral encore inédit).

**25** Hambourg, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe 1970.26.a.

pents à la place des sourcils,<sup>26</sup> et sur des cnémides des serpents suivant le volume du mollet.<sup>27</sup> Ce dernier détail est repris, en images, par Euphronios sur une cnémide de Kyknos.<sup>28</sup> La présence de serpents sur la panoplie n'est pas rare; c'est un trait facile à poser d'un coup de pinceau et qui s'adapte à bien des surfaces; on en trouve sur le dos d'une cuirasse, sur une épaulière, sur une paragnatide.<sup>29</sup> Plus étonnante, et unique à ma connaissance, la présence d'un serpent dessiné sur la crinière du casque d'un guerrier, comme si le mouvement d'ondulation de la crinière était évoqué par les ondulations du serpent qui animent cette surface.<sup>30</sup>

Le jeu des lignes accompagnant la structure anatomique du corps guerrier se développe dès les figures noires; Exékias en particulier a su couvrir les parties métalliques du corps de volutes et spirales qui font écho aux volutes que l'on observe sur les armes réelles; mais il va plus loin, et le tracé de ces lignes répond aux volutes qui ornent les zones près des anses. Les peintres ne se contentent pas de reproduire le décor des armes de leurs temps, ils embellissent et ajoutent des éléments empruntés à leur propre répertoire ornemental, celui des vases.

Ainsi chez le peintre d'Andokidès; dans la scène qui oppose deux guerriers encadrés par Athéna et Hermès, le guerrier de gauche porte des cuissardes et des cnémides ornées d'une large spirale, selon le modèle mis en place par Exékias (Fig. 5.4).<sup>31</sup> Son casque à double cimier soutenus par des serpents<sup>32</sup> déborde sur la ligne supérieure du cadre. Sa cuirasse, vue de face, comporte une double spirale soulignant les pectoraux, d'où émerge une palmette à trois feuilles qui se dresse vers son cou, doublée d'une autre plus petite qui descend vers son abdomen. Le système floral ainsi disposé correspond au motif de la chaîne de palmettes qui court au dessus de la scène. L'homologie entre décor des armes et décor du vase est très nette. Le peintre d'Andokidès

<sup>26</sup> New York, Metropolitan Museum 55.11.10; Newcastle upon Tyne, The Great North Museum 101; Londres, British Museum 1865.0722.1; Londres, British Museum 1100.

<sup>27</sup> Kunze 1991, pl. 40 (Olympie B4743); pl. 31 (Olympie B5024); pl. 32–34 (Olympie B4465); pl. 35, 2–3 (Olympie B5803, B5073); pl. 36 (Olympie B308, B5025, B5912, B8301); pl. 37 (Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery 54.2336); pl. 39 (Olympie B4464); pl. 40–44 (Olympie B4995; B5756); pl. 48 (Londres, British Museum 249).

<sup>28</sup> Rome, Villa Giulia (ex Hunt), supra note 18.

<sup>29</sup> Sur le dos de la cuirasse: Athènes, Acropole 2.336, coupe à figures rouges, BAPD 201753, ARV<sup>2</sup> 192.105, peintre de Kléophrades. Sur la paragnatide: New York, Metropolitan Museum 29.131.7, cratère à colonnettes à figures rouges, BAPD 205737, ARV<sup>2</sup> 511.4, peintre de Bologne 228; New York, Metropolitan Museum 07.286.70, col de loutrophore à figures rouges, BAPD 205752, ARV<sup>2</sup> 512.15, peintre de Bologne 228.

<sup>30</sup> Paris, Louvre G44, amphore à figures rouges, BAPD 200156, ARV<sup>2</sup> 27.3, Euthymides. La crinière ne se prête guère à un décor particulier, mais on note que sur une coupe à figures noires, Copenhague, Musée National 13966 (BAPD 350369), le nom du géant *Enkelados* est inscrit sur son cimier.

<sup>31</sup> Paris, Louvre G1, amphore à figures rouges, BAPD 200002, ARV<sup>2</sup> 3.2, peintre d'Andokidès.

<sup>32</sup> Un cimier de casque soutenu par un serpent se trouve aussi dans la sculpture de la même époque. Voir Dietrich 2018, 158 et 162, fig. 3.13.





**Fig. 5.4:** Amphore à figures rouges, avec deux guerriers encadrés par Athéna et Hermès, vers 520 av. J.C. Paris, Louvre.

importe dans le registre de la figuration les éléments qui relèvent du décor de la poterie.<sup>33</sup> Le peintre de Berlin, sur un mode beaucoup plus sobre, décore d'une discrète palmette la cuirasse d'Achille face à Hector.<sup>34</sup>

Ils ne sont pas les seuls à procéder ainsi. Une ou deux générations après les Pionniers on ne trouve plus beaucoup d'armures en écailles, mais les palmettes viennent se déployer sur l'équipement guerrier. On en trouve un bon nombre chez le peintre des Niobides, ou chez des peintres qui lui sont proches. Ainsi sur le cratère à volutes d'Agrigente, alors que les Amazones ont des cuirasses à écailles et des vêtements asiatiques bariolés, le guerrier porte une cuirasse anatomique sur la quelle les muscles abdominaux et les côtes sont soigneusement marqués mais surmontés au niveau

<sup>33</sup> Cf. aussi le casque d'Athéna sur Londres, British Museum B193, BAPD 200008, ARV<sup>2</sup> 4.8, peintre d'Andokidès. Jacobsthal 1927, pl. 37b et p. 42 souligne un autre détail remarquable: l'oreille d'Athéna est dessinée comme une spirale ornementale.

<sup>34</sup> Munich, Antikensammlung 2406, stamnos à figures rouges, BAPD 201956, ARV<sup>2</sup> 207.137, peintre de Berlin. Voir aussi Naples, Museo Archeologico H3137, amphore à col à figures rouges, BAPD 201870, ARV<sup>2</sup> 201.62, peintre de Berlin.





**Fig. 5.5:** Lécythe à fond blanc, avec une tête d'Athéna, vers 500 av. J.C. Londres, British Museum D22 (dessin F. Lissarrague).

des pectoraux par une double spirale qui soutient une palmette à sept feuilles.<sup>35</sup> Le casque de ce même guerrier est orné d'une volute et d'une fine palmette, tout comme ses cnémides. On retrouve la même combinaison d'éléments anatomiques et ornementaux sur la cuirasse d'un des guerriers combattant sur un cratère du Louvre.<sup>36</sup> Sur un cratère en calice attribué au peintre d'Altamura, dans une scène de combat entre Achille et Memnon, les mêmes détails sont repris sur la cuirasse d'Achille avec une prolifération de palmettes qui apparaissent non seulement sur la poitrine mais aussi aux épaules et sur le casque.<sup>37</sup>

Les motifs floraux sur le casque apparaissent beaucoup plus tôt; on en trouve un bel exemple chez le peintre de Bowdoin, qui représente la tête magnifiée d'Athéna, portant un casque ornée d'une large palmette portée par une fine tige, et encadrée de ces mêmes palmettes de part et d'autre de son visage (Fig. 5.5).<sup>38</sup>

C'est encore sur les armes d'Achille que ce travail ornemental s'exerce le plus souvent. Sur un cratère en calice attribué au peintre de Tysckiewicz, Achille porte on l'a vu une cuirasse d'écailles;<sup>39</sup> le cimier de son casque déborde sur la frise ornementale supérieure, et l'on voit sur la calotte du casque se dresser une palmette qui fait écho autant à celles qui terminent le brassard du bouclier qu'à celles qui figurent sur

<sup>35</sup> Agrigente, Museo Archeologico 2688, cratère à volutes à figures rouges, BAPD 206930, ARV<sup>2</sup> 599.2, peintre des Niobides.

<sup>36</sup> Paris, Louvre G343, cratère en calice à figures rouges, BAPD 206948, ARV<sup>2</sup> 600.17, peintre des Niobides. Cf. aussi Oxford, Ashmolean Museum 280, amphore à col à figures rouges, BAPD 206995, ARV<sup>2</sup> 604.56, peintre des Niobides.

<sup>37</sup> Paris, Louvre G342, cratère en calice à figures rouges, BAPD 206830, ARV<sup>2</sup> 590.12, peintre d'Altamura. Ce vase a été récemment démonté; merci à Anne Coulié qui m'a permis d'en examiner de près les fragments.

<sup>38</sup> Londres, British Museum D22, BAPD 208177, ARV<sup>2</sup> 687.219, peintre de Bowdoin.

<sup>39</sup> Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 97.368 (supra note 19).



**Fig. 5.6:** Amphore à figures rouges, avec l'enlèvement d'Antiope par Thésée et Peirithoos, vers 500–490 av. J.C. Paris, Louvre G197 (dessin K. Reichhold).

la frise supérieure. Enfin la grande coupe du peintre de Penthésilée à Munich donne au héros un casque particulièrement élaboré;<sup>40</sup> outre la sphinx qui orne le pare-joue, la calotte est ornée d'une chaîne de trois palmettes rehaussées de points de barbotine en relief. Un tel système ne se trouve que sur les vases et marque une fois encore la porosité entre décor des armes et décor des vases.<sup>41</sup>

Les ornements que l'on a rapidement examinés ici relèvent du système décoratif des vases.<sup>42</sup> On trouve confirmation de cette tendance sur une amphore du peintre de Triptolème<sup>43</sup> où les épaulières sont décorées d'une croix noire inscrite dans un carré noir, typique du répertoire ornemental de Douris<sup>44</sup> auquel le peintre de Triptolème se rattache en partie.

<sup>40</sup> Munich, Antikensammlung 2688, coupe à figures rouges, BAPD 211565, ARV<sup>2</sup> 879.1, peintre de Penthésilée.

<sup>41</sup> Par exemple Jacobstahl 1927, pl. 92a, 95b, 101a.

<sup>42</sup> J'ai volontairement laissé de côté toutes les figurations animales et les images insérées en silhouette sur les armes; j'en traiterai ailleurs.

<sup>43</sup> Bruxelles, Musées Royaux R308 (supra note 11). Cf. aussi coupe de Douris à Vienne (supra note 10).

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Buitron 1995, 49.

Un dernier exemple: une amphore attribuée à Myson, au Louvre, accumule tous ces éléments (Fig. 5.6).<sup>45</sup> Dans la scène de l'enlèvement d'Antiope, le casque de Thésée et le bonnet 'scythe' d'Antiope, reine des Amazones, sont ornés de volutes et de palmettes; volutes qui se déploient également sur les cnémides de Thésée et de son compagnon, Peirithoos, tandis que leurs cuirasses sont couvertes d'écailles tout comme le casque de Peirithoos et le carquois d'Antiope.

En appliquant aux armes le répertoire ornemental des vases les peintres passent d'un médium à l'autre et appliquent à une catégorie d'objets les propriétés de l'autre. L'ornement fait partie de l'image et ajoute prestige et éclat aux objets auxquels il s'applique. Ce n'est sans doute pas par hasard si beaucoup de nos exemples concernent la figure d'Achille, dont les armes sont emblématiques de l'imaginaire héroïque. Le héros est mis en valeur par cet investissement graphique, qui focalise sur les matériaux, la couleur et l'éclat des armes. C'est aussi le moyen de donner aux usagers des vases, eux mêmes citoyens et guerriers, une image valorisante de leur propre statut et une référence épique prestigieuse, soulignée par l'intensité de l'ornement.

C'est enfin, pour les peintres, le moyen d'attirer l'œil du spectateur et de montrer leur virtuosité. Ils ne sont pas les seuls à procéder ainsi, et j'aimerais finir ce rapide examen avec un objet d'un tout autre ordre, la stèle funéraire de Kalliadès fils de Kallikratos (Fig. 5.7).<sup>46</sup> Cette stèle, fragmentaire, est d'un type banal: une pierre verticale ornée de deux fleurons placés sous l'inscription qui donne le nom du défunt, son patronyme et son dème, *Peiraieus*. Plus étonnant, le sommet de la stèle surmonté d'un casque frontal posé sur des feuilles d'acanthés et dont le cimier se confond avec les ornements floraux qui fréquemment figurent à cette place. Le casque est ainsi à la fois fait de crin et de feuilles; les deux registres du végétal et de l'animal sont confondus pour produire une sorte d'image-valise où le cimier est un feuillage et le feuillage, un cimier, inscrivant ainsi l'image du guerrier défunt dans l'espace du végétal toujours vert aux yeux des vivants. Virtuosité du sculpteur qui a su trouver, comme les peintres avant lui, le moyen de jouer sur des plans de figurations distincts pour obtenir non seulement un effet de surprise qui attire l'œil du passant, mais une forme expressive dont la densité significative repose sur une forme de redoublement d'intensité.

<sup>45</sup> Paris, Louvre G 197 (supra note 18).

<sup>46</sup> Athènes, Musée National 876; Conze 1906, 352, n° 1658; cf. Walter-Karydi 2015, 313, fig. 196.



**Fig. 5.7:** Stèle funéraire de Kal-liades, vers 350 av. J.C. Athènes MN 876 (dessin F. Lissarrague).

## Abréviations

ABV: Beazley, J. D. (1956) *Attic Black-Figure Vase-Painters*. Oxford.

ARV<sup>2</sup>: Beazley, J. D. (1963) *Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters*, 2ème éd. Oxford.

BAPD: numéro de vase dans les archives Beazley (disponible en ligne: [www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/index.htm](http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/index.htm)).

CVA: *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum*.

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## Crédits

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Fig. 5.2: Reproduction d'après Furtwängler et Reichhold 1904–1932, pl. 14.

Fig. 5.3: Reproduction d'après Furtwängler et Reichhold 1904–1932, pl. 123.

Fig. 5.4: Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons; photo: Marie-Lan Nguyen.

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Fig. 5.7: © F. Lissarrague.



Nikolina Kéi

## Beneath the handles of Attic vases\*

Anyone who has visited a museum filled of Greek pots will know how difficult it is closely to examine and appreciate a vase – especially the reverse side and the area beneath the handles. Dozens of pots, closely packed together in a rather limited space, are exhibited so as almost exclusively to show a ‘main’ scene. Although it is commonplace nowadays to assert that vases were originally seen from multiple angles, many museums continue to display them as if they were not three-dimensional objects but rather more like two-dimensional paintings.<sup>1</sup> This phenomenon is of course due to the lack of space in modern galleries. But it also reflects an academic tradition that goes back to the Neoclassical context of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, according to which the area beneath the handles is thought to have been reserved for secondary and meaningless ornaments – to serve as a frame for the central pictorial field (occupied by figures in action). In other words, there is assumed to be a neat dichotomy between what we usually call the ‘ornamental’ and ‘figurative’ registers of the pot – between ‘decoration’ and ‘image’, no less than between ‘frame’ and ‘scene’. Needless to say, the underlying idea behind this polarity between ‘ornament and figure’ is the painted canvas – the hanging picture that is presented within a decorative frame in our modern picture galleries.<sup>2</sup>

Because Greek panel-pictures do not survive in the archaeological record, Attic vases had to compensate for this regretful loss of ancient painting: considered as the reflection of ancient *pinakes*, painted pots have had their surface divided into two enclosed and autonomous registers – the main picture field and its frame (including above all the handle area). However, Attic vases are not flat panel-pictures, and the handle area is much more than an ornamental framing register. This claim can be demonstrated at the outset by considering two main facts. First, in many cases, abstract, stylised and disproportionate florals from the ‘ornamental’ framing register

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1 The same is true for numerous book publications and online vase-collections: for many of the vases mentioned in this paper, it was supremely difficult to find a photograph of the handle area. On the historical treatment of Greek vases as ‘two-dimensional’ pictures, see now Marconi 2017, esp. 117–125.

2 On the ideology of the frame in post-Enlightenment contexts, see Platt and Squire 2017, 7–84 (discussing painted pottery at e.g. 12–21), along with Dietrich 2017, esp. 270–274. On the Kantian backdrop to this thinking, and the idea of the *ergon* and *parergon*, see Squire’s introduction to this volume (16–22), along with Neer’s chapter (206–209).

of the vase find their way right into the main scene where they are fully integrated as ornaments, narrative agents and polyvalent signs of aesthetic, sensory and sensuous experience: manipulated by figures, growing out of the ground like ‘real’ plants or just floating in the pictorial field, these floral elements magnify figures while supplying the narration with a host of values linked to the Greek notions of *kosmos*, *poikilia* and *charis*.<sup>3</sup> Second, the opposite is also true: very often, the ‘framing register’, namely the handle area, is occupied by figures, sometimes in close interaction with abstract and stylised ornaments. After all, figures – namely animals and ships – made their first, discreet appearance in the sub-handle zone of Middle Geometric vases (c. 850–760 BC).<sup>4</sup>

It is precisely this second fact that will serve as the starting point in my chapter: in what follows, the aim is to show how figures, objects and floral elements – depicted beneath the handles of Attic vases dated to the sixth and fifth centuries BC – are not mere space-fillers, but elements pregnant with significance. In doing so, I will show that the handle area, despite being marginal within the architecture of the vase,<sup>5</sup> is semantically loaded; likewise, that the modern separation between ‘ornament’ and ‘figure’ – fictitious categories created for chronological and stylistic scholarly purposes – is deeply problematic in the context of Attic vase-painting. In other words, far from being monolithic and stereotypical, the so-called ‘ornamental’ and ‘figurative’ registers of Attic vases interact with one another in numerous ways. Given that the corpus of handle area motifs is enormous, I have had to make a choice based first on their ornamental and semantic interest, and second on their interplay with the main scenes.

So what exactly do we find under a handle? It seems that there are no clear-cut rules – and that the list is limitless. As we shall see, there are animals (especially dogs, felines, goats and dolphins), birds, insects and hybrid creatures. There are also plants (stylised trees, grapevines and palmettes), rocks, caves or mountains, ‘abbreviated’ architectural structures (doors, columns, altars and even city-walls) and prestigious objects (tripods, elaborated stools and chairs, kraters, arms etc.). And, of course, there are humans, heroes, deities and, quite often, satyrs. In order to fit into the limited space beneath the handle, figures are depicted either seated, bent, kneeling, fallen on the ground or miniaturised. The narrowness of the space also explains the presence of so many small-scale young boys. Likewise, the handle area is a liminal space that may suggest a state of transition (hence the frequent presence of winged deities, Dionysus and Hermes), isolation and remoteness. It is also an area

<sup>3</sup> Kéi 2015 and 2016; cf. also Neer’s chapter in this volume, 211.

<sup>4</sup> Coulié 2013, 42–45. Cf. the chapters in this volume by Haug and Neer.

<sup>5</sup> The handle area is a liminal space within a vase’s architecture because it is visually less accessible: when the viewer holds the vase by its handles, what naturally attracts his attention is the main side(s) – and only on second glance the area beneath the handles.



prone to transgressive and obscene behaviour. In many cases, and through a variety of means, the handle area enables a destabilising, surprising effect: vegetal patterns, for example, could be transformed into human faces,<sup>6</sup> and the handle itself could likewise actively participate in the scene by taking the place of a narrative element (such as the branch of a tree).

Despite the high degree of *poikilia* in these handle motifs, some more or less common patterns emerge: 1) the handle motifs invest the main scene(s) with supplementary layers of meaning; 2) they shift the viewer's gaze from one side of the vase to the other; 3) they interact with stylised and abstract 'framing ornaments' in a way that blurs the boundaries between the vase's 'ornamental' and 'figurative' registers; and 4) they draw attention to themselves by means of surprising or transgressive behaviour.

Before demonstrating what I mean here, it is necessary to explain my decision to structure what follows around the morphology of different handles, treating first the space around pots with vertical handles, and second that around pots with horizontal handles. My choice of formal criteria can be justified in two ways. First, the figurative programme is subordinated to the vase's specific shape, itself derived from the vase's practical use. In other words, the arrangement of the picture field as a whole (including figures and ornaments) is more or less defined by the handles' type of attachment to the vase's body. For example, in many examples where the handles are attached in the upper part or in the middle of a pot's body, they 'disturb' the placement of the figures: the painter is then forced either to leave the handle area undecorated or else to integrate it into the scene. In the former case, the handle is perceived as an obstacle, and in the latter as a challenge. My second justification is that each handle form creates different visual effects and thus different meanings. The following examples reveal that the handle area, although particularly delicate and challenging to decorate, supplies the economy of the vase with its visual and semantic variegation. Given that the majority of vases presented in this chapter were used in connection with serving and consuming wine within the context of the symposium, such *poikilia* would surely have been much appreciated by ancient viewers.<sup>7</sup>

## Vertical handles

Usually, the space beneath the vertical handles of an amphora is occupied by the stereotypical lotus-palmette pattern serving as a frame for the two scenes of the vase. Nevertheless, in some cases, the floral frame is adorned with living creatures: on an

<sup>6</sup> One might compare here Platt's discussion of Fig. 9.7b in this volume (262–264).

<sup>7</sup> On the sympotic context, cf. Neer's chapter in this volume (221–224).

amphora in the manner of Exekias (c. 520 BC),<sup>8</sup> two owls are proudly posing between the tendrils, with their heads shown frontally (Fig. 6.1). Even though they do not really interact with the figures represented on either side of the vase (on one side Hermes and two women, on the other Dionysus and satyrs), their presence is not superfluous: they act as an animating figurative device which makes the stylised pattern look more natural, more vegetal, more real. The motif also gives the slight impression that the figures of both scenes move in a natural environment.<sup>9</sup> But there is more. After all, owls are famous for their fascinating gaze: by looking straight at the viewer, they invite him to hold his attention to them and on the lateral side in general, instead of looking at the main parts of the vase where the action takes place.

Similar effects could be produced in even more audacious ways. On an amphora now in London (c. 550 BC),<sup>10</sup> and on a contemporary oinochoe by the potter Nikosthenes,<sup>11</sup> the lotus-palmette has been transformed into a human face by the addition of two eyes. Once again, this is a device that has no direct implication for the understanding of the main scenes of the vase, since there is no direct interaction with the figures. Yet we are dealing here with a figural transgression that animates the vase while creating a surprise effect: the viewer finds himself manipulating an anthropomorphised vessel that ‘stares’ back at him.<sup>12</sup>

Painters sometimes also chose handle motifs with an immediate semantic connection to the main scenes, and in a way that shifts the viewer’s gaze from the ‘periphery’ to the ‘centre’. This is the case when the painter replaces the traditional lotus-palmette pattern with grape vines, as on an amphora by Hattatt’s Painter (c. 520–500 BC).<sup>13</sup> Visually, the entwined trunks of these vines extend the handles’ vertical division in a very ornamental way. Semantically, the grape vines as well as the krater placed close to one of them are related to both scenes of the vase, one representing Dionysus as a banqueter in the company of a woman and satyrs, the other the return of Hephaestus to Olympos.

If the grape vines ‘sprout’ on Attic vases, this happens thanks to Dionysus. Indeed, on a rather exceptional amphora signed by the potter Amasis and attributed

<sup>8</sup> Bochum, Kunstsammlungen der Ruhr-Universität S1089; BAPD 9019204; CVA Bochum, Kunstsammlungen der Ruhr-Universität 1, plates 26.1–3, 27.1–3. On floral ornaments beneath handles, see Jacobsthal 1927. On floral ornaments as ‘landscape’ elements, see Hurwit 1992, 63–72. See also Kéi 2015 and 2016.

<sup>9</sup> This is even more accentuated by the presence of animals in the zone beneath the scenes.

<sup>10</sup> London, British Museum B260; BAPD 7848; Steinhart 1995, Plate 14.4. On the ‘anthropomorphic animation’ of vases, see Martens 1992, 285–359 – along with the chapters by Haug and Neer (esp. 210–211) in this volume.

<sup>11</sup> Paris, Musée du Louvre F 116; BAPD 301232; *ABV* 230.2; *Add<sup>2</sup>* 59; Steinhart 1995, Plate 14.3.

<sup>12</sup> Compare here Squire’s discussion of the ‘Euphorbus Plate’ (Figs. 1.1 and 1.4) in the introduction to this volume.

<sup>13</sup> Oxford, Ashmolean Museum 1982.1097; BAPD 7306; Kurtz 1982, 139–168.



**Fig. 6.1:** Amphora in the manner of Exekias, c. 520 BC, Bochum, Kunstsammlungen der Ruhr-Universität S1089.

to the Amasis Painter (c. 520–515 BC), it is the god himself who holds the vegetal frame under each handle – an ivy branch in one hand, and a vine branch in the other.<sup>14</sup> In order to fit within the space, Dionysus is depicted to a smaller scale. He strides to the left but turns his head to look back, and in such a way as to relate to both scenes – one side representing a warrior’s departure, the other Athena in conversation with a bearded man (perhaps Poseidon).<sup>15</sup>

Satyrs, as the acolytes of Dionysus, are particularly fond of the field beneath the handles. As usual, we see them acting in odd and transgressive ways: among other things, they masturbate, ejaculate, vomit and crawl. On an amphora close to

<sup>14</sup> Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 01.8026; BAPD 310453; *ABV* 152.26; *Para* 63; *Add*<sup>2</sup> 44.

<sup>15</sup> As Cornelia Isler-Kerényi puts it, ‘both this ambivalent formula and the position of the figure on the vase emphasize the god’s affinity with passages, transitions’ (Isler-Kerényi 2007, 136). The same might be said of the figure of Hermes, as we will see below (153–154).

the Euphiletos Painter (c. 530–520 BC)<sup>16</sup> the transgression takes the form of a fusion between the ornamental and figurative registers: a diminutive satyr holds on to the handle ornament while a second one hangs from it. Their miniaturised presence annuls the separation that the handle zone imposes between the two sides of the vase, while also giving the impression of a continuum between the two main scenes showing Dionysus in the company of satyrs.

But such transgressive behaviour is not exclusive to satyrs. An amphora attributed to a painter of the Medea Group (c. 520 BC)<sup>17</sup> shows a bearded man and a woman (Dionysus and Ariadne?) feasting in the presence of a cortège figured on the other side. Although the scene extends around the vase, there is a marked contrast between the rather ceremonial main scene and the lateral sides: under one handle, a man squats in order to vomit, under the other, a man is actually vomiting.

Sometimes, instead of filling the gap between the two main scenes with a (more or less transgressive) figure, the field beneath the handles is occupied by vignettes, as on an amphora in Naples (c. 540–520 BC) where we see two miniaturised Heracleian deeds:<sup>18</sup> on one side Heracles fighting the boar, on the other Heracles fighting the Nemean lion. These small appended scenes are autonomous in the sense that they may stand on their own. But this does not mean that there is no link between them and the main sides. On the contrary, they operate as paradigmatic models of bravery, enhancing the heroic character of the amphora's two scenes, portraying Theseus' fight against the Minotaur on one side and a warriors' duel on the other.

The miniaturisation of figures finds its best expression on an amphora by the Affecter (c. 540–530 BC), who chose to place a small figured panel on the lower part of each handle, just above the attachment – a device that is exclusive to this painter (Fig. 6.2).<sup>19</sup> The first panel shows a running youth and Bellerophon riding Pegasus; below are a stool, a bird and a horseman (all also miniaturised). The second panel shows a draped man holding a spear and a horseman, while below we once again find Bellerophon and Pegasus. As on the amphora in Naples, these vignettes infuse the main scenes (portraying a warrior's departure with Hermes and Poseidon on one side, and horsemen and Poseidon on the other) with heroic connotations – as well as a sense of rapid movement. Furthermore, it is interesting that the old man, shown close to one handle, is depicted in smaller scale than the rest of the figures: it is as if the proximity to the handle area had a diminishing effect on him.

<sup>16</sup> Munich, Staatliche Antikensammlungen 1444; BAPD 301734; *ABV* 325; *Add<sup>2</sup>* 88. On this vase and others representing satyrs beneath the handles, see Lissarrague 2013, 57–61.

<sup>17</sup> New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art (Shelby White and Leon Levy Collection); BAPD 43275; von Bothmer 1991, 140–141.

<sup>18</sup> Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale 81103; BAPD 13847; *CVA* Naples, Museo Nazionale 1, III.H.E.7, Plates 11.1–4.

<sup>19</sup> Paris, Musée du Louvre F19; BAPD 301316; *ABV* 241.28.



**Fig. 6.2:** Amphora by the Affector, c. 540–530 BC, Paris, Musée du Louvre F19.

As mentioned above, handles posed quite a challenge for painters since they touch the upper part of the body and hence interrupt the continuum of the scenes. One of the solutions, as we just saw, was to diminish the scale of the figures; another was to depict figures who are seated. Even then, however, the result is not always satisfactory: consider an amphora in London (c. 500 BC),<sup>20</sup> where the handle actually overlaps the head of a warrior sitting on a block.

In some cases, we have the impression that the field under the handles is a discreet space for figures to hide and remain isolated. Many know the amphora signed by the potter Andokides and attributed to the Andokides Painter (c. 520 BC) in Berlin,<sup>21</sup> but only a few remember the crouching hare depicted at the base of each handle; it is as if the hares were hidden in a hole (Fig. 6.3). The relation of the hares to the two scenes on the amphora – representing Heracles and Apollo struggling for the tripod on one side, and young men wrestling on the other – is far from obvious. Should we consider the hare as a love token, adding erotic connotations to the wrestling scene (as with the flower held by the young and elegant referee)?<sup>22</sup> Although the suggestion is tempting, it must be pointed out that one hare is facing towards the wrestling scene, the other towards the mythological scene.

Under each handle of a krater in Berlin (c. 460–450 BC)<sup>23</sup> a youth stands as a silent and isolated spectator of the main scenes representing on one side Tithonos pursued by Eos, and on the other the departure of a warrior. The posture of the youth might remind us of Dionysus on the amphora by the potter Amasis discussed above (146–147): while the head is directed towards one of the scenes, his body is directed

<sup>20</sup> London, British Museum B294; BAPD 11931; CVA London, British Museum 4, Plates 71.3A–D.

<sup>21</sup> Berlin, Antikensammlung F2159; BAPD 200001; *ABV* 253.1; *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 3.1; *Para* 320; *Add*<sup>2</sup> 149. On the scene's erotic connotations, see Frontisi-Ducroux 2012, 289.

<sup>22</sup> On hares as love tokens, see Schnapp 1997, 247–257 and 337–354. On the erotic connotations of flowers, see Kéi 2007; 2008; 2015; and 2016.

<sup>23</sup> Berlin, Antikensammlung F2371; BAPD 9025077; CVA Berlin, Antikensammlung 11, Plate 1.



**Fig. 6.3:** Amphora signed by the potter Andokides and attributed to the Andokides Painter, c. 520 BC, Berlin, Antikensammlung F2159.

towards the other. In this way, although isolated, both youths guarantee the visual continuity between the two autonomous scenes. Moreover, the fact that the youths are entirely wrapped in a mantle – a visual metaphor of their *aidôs*, of their shyness, modesty and timidity<sup>24</sup> – enhances their isolation from the surroundings.

As mentioned above, prestigious objects and architectural elements may occupy the area beneath the handles. But their presence should by no means be considered as an accessory to the scenes. Instead, they can sometimes operate as indicators of a sacred or domestic space. An amphora now in Göttingen (c. 530–520 BC)<sup>25</sup> shows, in a very minimalistic way, a crouching warrior (perhaps Achilles ambushing Troilos) on one side, and Apollo on the other. Under each handle, we find a tripod, a luxury and highly crafted object with semantic and ornamental properties.<sup>26</sup> Although isolated, the tripod is related to both sides of the vase: like the palm tree, it is not only an Apollonian attribute but also a topographical indicator of the god's sanctuary where Troilos was finally killed. Visually, the elongated form of the tripod is aligned with the vertical emphasis of the handles. One may even assert that its imposing presence, well adapted to the sub-handle area, goes hand in hand with its semantic importance.

On an amphora by the Affector (c. 540–530 BC)<sup>27</sup> a flaming altar constitutes the point at which a procession of men arrive, leading a ram to sacrifice. In this case, the central element of the visual narrative is figured on the liminal and visually less accessible space beneath the handle. The visual and semantic importance of the altar is enhanced by the fact that it is flanked by two figures, a man at the head of the procession and a small-scale woman, most probably a priestess. Nevertheless, it is not clear whether the sacrifice is connected to Dionysus (who is shown on one side of the vase).<sup>28</sup>

<sup>24</sup> On the 'enveloping mantle' as a visual metaphor of *aidôs*, see Ferrari 1990 and 2002.

<sup>25</sup> Göttingen, Georg-August-Universität J12; BAPD 6901; CVA Göttingen 3, Plates 271–6.

<sup>26</sup> See also an amphora attributed to Group E: Munich, Staatliche Antikensammlungen J476; BAPD 310320; ABV 137.60; *Para* 55; *Add*<sup>2</sup> 37. On tripods as polyvalent signs, see Papalexandrou 2005.

<sup>27</sup> Munich, Staatliche Antikensammlungen J77; BAPD 301332; ABV 243.44; *Add*<sup>2</sup> 62.

<sup>28</sup> Under the other handle of the vase there are two men depicted to a smaller scale.

Another case of a handle motif that is highly important for understanding the main scene is found on a loutrophoros (c. 430–420 BC) in Boston:<sup>29</sup> a bridegroom leads the bride to his house, which is indicated by a slightly ajar double door under the handle. The door, revealing the nuptial bed within, marks a space of transition: literally, from one side of the vase to the other; and metaphorically, as the woman shifts in status from *parthenos* to wedded wife. Out of the chamber flies an Eros whose presence bewilders the woman who is shown standing beside him – once again, the area beneath the handle has a surprise effect. At the same time, the motif also creates an impression of depth, since we have here three planes of representation: Eros, the door and the bed.<sup>30</sup> As on the previously discussed Munich Affecter amphora, this loutrophoros clearly shows that, although the handle area is marginal within the vase's architecture, it could host motifs that are of primary importance for the semantics of the main scene(s). The point should encourage us to question the widespread premise of a difference in semantic density between the main picture field (most often figural) and the handle area (most often ornamental), the former usually being considered to be more important than the latter.

A pelike attributed to the Painter of Tarquinia 707 (c. 450 BC) nicely demonstrates the inaccuracy of this premise. On one side, the pelike shows a woman in a chariot accompanied by a woman holding torches; on the other, a youth is portrayed in a chariot, accompanied by a woman holding libation instruments.<sup>31</sup> Quite unexpectedly, however, the main figures are represented on the lateral sides: in one scene, Dionysus, seated on a chair, holds a kantharos in one hand and, in the other, a vine branch and thyrsus (the upper part of which is painted *on* the handle itself); on the other, Heracles, seated on a rock, holds a club and a kantharos, whereas his quiver and bow are depicted hanging above him (and once again *on* the handle). Obviously, the central figure of this awkward representation is Heracles since the two chariots are directed towards him while moving away from Dionysus.

A pelike in the manner of the Leningrad Painter (c. 450–425 BC)<sup>32</sup> perfectly sums up what has so far been said about vases with vertical handles: namely, that the handle area joining and disjoining the two sides of the vase can be visually heightened and semantically charged despite its physical marginality (Figs. 6.4a–b). The main scene shows Peleus wrestling with Thetis: a diminutive panther and a snake suggest Thetis' animal transformations in order to escape the aggressor. Beneath one handle stands a vertical element (perhaps the trunk of a tree), close to which are

<sup>29</sup> Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 03.802; BAPD 15815; Reeder 1995, 166–167, n. 24.

<sup>30</sup> A half-open door revealing a bridal bed figures also beneath the handle of a loutrophoros-hydria attributed to the Marlay Painter (c. 430 BC): Athens, Benaki Museum 35495; BAPD 216204; ARV<sup>2</sup> 1277.17.

<sup>31</sup> Brussels, Musées Royaux R235; BAPD 214829; ARV<sup>2</sup> 1121.11. The vertical handles of pelikai constitute an even greater challenge for painters than those of (for example) amphoras and kraters because their attachments are placed not in the upper but in the middle part of the vase's body.

<sup>32</sup> Paris, Musée du Louvre G 373; BAPD 206594; ARV<sup>2</sup> 573.9; *Add<sup>2</sup>* 262.



**Fig. 6.4a:** Pelike in the manner of the Lenin-grad Painter, c. 450–425 BC, Paris, Musée du Louvre G 373.



**Fig. 6.4b:** Other side of the same pelike.

depicted a rock and a coiled snake (Fig. 6.4a). A palmette is painted on the lower part of the handle, as is usually the case on pelikai: it has no figural or semantic function. It is interesting, though, that its spotted border (a singular occurrence, so far as I know) recalls the snake's skin and the panther's coat: all of them create an effect of *poikilia*, that is of a variegated impression.<sup>33</sup> Even more interesting is the scene on the other side of the vase, where Thetis' sisters run to the altar (and to the figure of Nereus who stands beside it). The scene ends with the figure of Cheiron, whose torso is actually depicted on the handle so as to project out from the pelike's contained pictorial field (Fig. 6.4b). Once again, the arrangement has a real three-dimensional effect: as viewers, we have the impression that the centaur is closer to us, emerging out of the vase. It should also be noted that, while the figure of the centaur overlaps the handle, on the other side, it is the handle that overlaps the Nereids.

<sup>33</sup> On the *poikilia* of snakes and panthers, see Grand-Clément 2011, 439–441, 444–447; on similar effects created through the painterly representation of armour, see Lissarrague's chapter in this volume.



## Horizontal handles

Horizontal handles create different visual effects from vertical handles: their arched form draws the viewers' attention to the emblazoned sub-handle motifs, which become focal points outside the main scenes. Nevertheless, many of the same observations made about the area around vertical handles play out in the case of the space around horizontal ones.

A stamnos by the Harrow Painter (c. 470 BC)<sup>34</sup> shows Heracles fighting against the Nemean Lion; Athena and a woman watch the deed on the main side, while Hermes, Poseidon and a woman are shown on the reverse. Heracles' *panoplia* are duly found in the area around the handles: his mantle, bow and quiver are shown under one handle, while his club is shown under the other. Isolated and free-standing, these attributes attract the viewer's eye while also emphasising the fact that Heracles is fighting with bare hands. The mantle, quiver and bow are further highlighted by a second arch formed by the extended arm of a woman and that of Hermes, prolonged by his *kerykeion*: their gestures suggest their utter astonishment at Heracles' deed.

In other cases, the handles of stamnoi overlap figures and objects. Consider a stamnos by the Providence Painter (c. 475–450 BC), portraying a divine assembly.<sup>35</sup> Through one handle, a stable architectural element, runs a column; through the other is Hermes, a god always in motion who, like Dionysus, presides over boundaries and transitions and who is therefore in the right place.<sup>36</sup> Hermes looks towards Poseidon, but his right foot is oriented towards Hera on the opposite side – a posture that is often adopted by figures placed on the handle area in order to assure a narrative continuation between the two sides of the vase.<sup>37</sup> The liminality of Hermes is also suggested on a fragmentary cup attributed to the Brygos Painter (c. 490–480 BC)<sup>38</sup> on which the god, still an infant, rests in a cradle that has been placed close to a rocky cave occupying the space around the handle. The cave is that of Mount Kyllene, Maia's deep-shadowed dwelling – it is Hermes' secret birthplace, and the hiding place for the cattle that the young god stole from Apollo.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Munich, Staatliche Antikensammlungen 2407; BAPD 202871; ARV<sup>2</sup> 274.35.

<sup>35</sup> Paris, Musée du Louvre G370; BAPD 207405; ARV<sup>2</sup> 639.54; *Add<sup>2</sup>* 273; Laurens and Lissarrague 1990, 54–73 (esp. 60).

<sup>36</sup> See Vernant 1985, 155–201. The idea of transition is also conveyed by winged deities depicted in the sub-handle area of nuptial vases. See, for example, a lebes attributed to the Washing Painter in New York (Metropolitan Museum of Art 07.286.35; BAPD 214881; ARV<sup>2</sup> 1126.1; *Para* 453; *Add<sup>2</sup>* 332) and a lebes in Hanover (Museum August Kestner 1966.116; BAPD 8737; CVA Hanover 1, 51–52, Plates 41.1–4).

<sup>37</sup> See the Amasis amphora in Boston and the krater in Berlin discussed above (nn. 14, 23).

<sup>38</sup> Princeton, University Art Museum 1990–1992. Images of the cup can be found on the museum's official website. See also a very similar cup by the same painter in the Vatican (Museo Gregoriano Etrusco Vaticano 16582; BAPD 203905; ARV<sup>2</sup> 369.6; *Para* 367; *Add<sup>2</sup>* 224).

<sup>39</sup> *Hom. Hymn Herm.* 1–19, 142–149, 170–172, 228–234.

The cup by the Brygos Painter suggests that rocky caves and mountains, indicating as they do liminal and remote spaces, are particularly appropriate for the handle area, which is visually less accessible than the rest of the vase. By way of parallel, consider too a fragmentary cup by Makron (c. 490–480 BC),<sup>40</sup> which shows Zeus handing over the infant Dionysus to the nymphs. The episode takes place on Mount Nysa, indicated here by the rocky terrain and conifers in the handle area, and marked out by the use of outline technique. This shift in technique emphasises the fact that Mount Nysa is a faraway, unspoiled hiding place.<sup>41</sup>

Although the area beneath the handles is even smaller on vases with horizontal handles than on those with vertical ones, there are no limits to what may be depicted in this space: the range extends from a tiny insect (cf. below, 159–161) to the walls of a city, as on a cup attributed to the Euergides Painter (c. 520–500 BC).<sup>42</sup> This vase shows an episode from the Trojan War: on one side, we see two running warriors and a horseman, one of them named ‘Hector’; on the reverse, we see another running warrior, an armed horseman and a nude boy named ‘Telephus’. The space around and within one handle is occupied by the walls and gate of Troy. Beneath the other handle we find a square base on which seven circular shapes lie (Figs. 6.5): we are looking here at a table topped with a board-game, and we see the two figures either side fixated on the game.<sup>43</sup> Despite their completely different scale, the two handle motifs – one showing the walls of the city, the other a table topped with a board-game – are closely linked. After all, the game being played here might plausibly be identified as the *polis* board-game: the board itself represents a city’s territory and a battlefield, just as its pieces represent the armies of two cities.<sup>44</sup> By two completely different means, in other words, the two handle motifs may refer to one and the same space.

Although particularly confined, the area beneath horizontal handles is frequently occupied by what we may call spatial indicators which are almost always related to the main scenes: not just city walls, trees, columns, rocks, but also *loutêria* (‘washing

<sup>40</sup> Athens, National Archaeological Museum B76; BAPD 204701; *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 460.20; *Para* 377; *Add*<sup>2</sup> 244.

<sup>41</sup> See also Frankfurt, Liebighaus STV7; BAPD 204131; *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 386, 398.7; *Para* 521; *Add*<sup>2</sup> 229. A shift in technique occurs also in the handle-zone of a cup by the Andokides Painter in Palermo (Museo Archeologico Regionale 2051; BAPD 200014; *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 5.14, 37.1; *Para* 114, 321; *Add*<sup>2</sup> 66, 150).

<sup>42</sup> London, British Museum E10; BAPD 200728; *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 90.33; *Add*<sup>2</sup> 170.

<sup>43</sup> Needless to say, that scene recalls the famous amphora of Exekias in the Vatican (discussed briefly by Grethlein in this volume: Fig. 3.5; Museo Gregoriano Etrusco Vaticano 344; BAPD 310395; *ABV* 145.13; *Para* 60; *Add*<sup>2</sup> 40). The cup is even closer to an eye-cup attributed to the Amasis Painter, showing in each handle area two seated male winged figures playing a board-game: Copenhagen, National Museum 13521; BAPD 504; CVA Copenhagen, National Museum 8, Plate 326. On the board-game played by Achilles and Ajax, see Mackay 2010, 332–339; Dasen 2015, 81–98 and esp. 90–91. A board-game is also represented in the handle zone of a fragmentary cup signed by Brygos: Athens, Acropolis Museum 5791; BAPD 204332; *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 398.13.

<sup>44</sup> On this game see Hansen 2002; cf. also Kurke 1999.

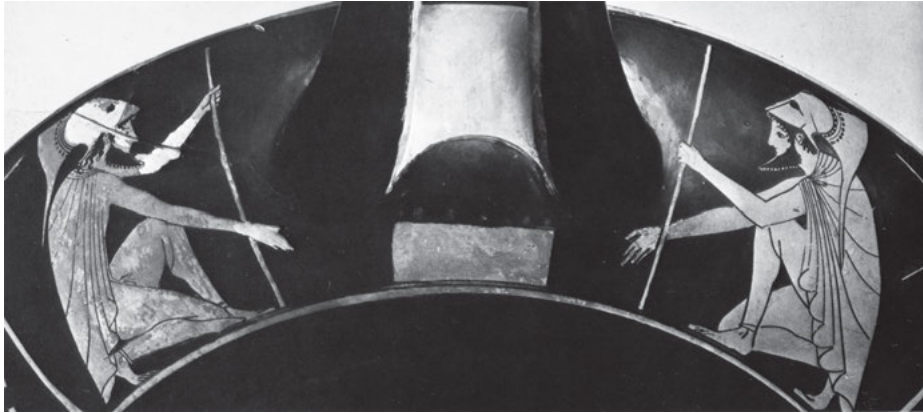


Fig. 6.5: Cup by the Euergides Painter, c. 520–500 BC, London, British Museum E10.

basins'), pillars or athletic and sympotic paraphernalia. A skyphos by the Zephyros Painter (c. 460–450 BC) shows male figures working out on a sports ground (*palais-tra*).<sup>45</sup> Instead of the floral frame that the painter usually depicts, we see, beneath one handle, a nude youth bending over his hoe to smooth the soil, and on the other, objects denoting a gymnastic space: a pillar marks the start or end of a running track, a pair of sandals, athletic equipment (an aryballos and strigil) and a large *loutêrion*. The pillar and basin both serve as a surface for writing: on them, we read the Greek adjective *kalos*, meaning 'handsome'. In a similar way, on the pointed amphora depicted beneath the handle of a cup signed by the potter Euphronios and attributed to Onesimos (c. 490–480 BC),<sup>46</sup> we read *ho pais* – which refers either to a boy or a slave. These inscriptions clearly invite the viewer to focus on the margins of the main scene(s) and read them out aloud.

A good example of how significant the handle motifs may be, even though marginalised on the material space of the vase, is a cup by Makron (c. 490–480 BC) showing a symposium on both of its exterior sides.<sup>47</sup> A *pais* is depicted under one handle: his small size denotes his young age as well as his status as a slave or servant.<sup>48</sup> Visually, this *pais*, holding an oinochoe and a strainer, is counterbalanced by the large wreathed krater shown beneath the other handle, from which the *pais* will draw some more wine for the guests. As François Lissarrague has noted, the *pais* and the krater are not marginalised, at least in the context of the 'real' symposium taking place in the *andrôn*; they must be put in their proper place, at the centre of the cel-

<sup>45</sup> Previously in the Hirschmann Collection G18; BAPD 7205; Bloesch (ed.) 1982, 80–81, n. 39.

<sup>46</sup> Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 95.27; BAPD 203223; ARV<sup>2</sup> 325.76; Add<sup>2</sup> 216.

<sup>47</sup> New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 20.246; BAPD 204800; ARV<sup>2</sup> 467.118; Para 378; Add<sup>2</sup> 245.

<sup>48</sup> As pointed out above, representing young boys in a smaller scale is a very convenient way of filling the half-sized space.

ebriation.<sup>49</sup> On another cup by the same painter,<sup>50</sup> also showing a symposium, the *pais*, exhausted from serving the guests, rests in a squatting position under one of the handles. He is now a fixed element, just like the calyx-krater with the ivy wreath placed below the opposite handle. He also has something of the satyrs' indecent behaviour about him: after all, he exhibits his genitals – a posture that signals his slave status but also attracts the viewer's attention.

In the case of a cup attributed to the Painter of the Fourteenth Brygos (c. 490–480 BC), representing the ransom of Hector (cf. Hom. *Il.* 24.440–676),<sup>51</sup> the motif under the handle seems to operate as a link between the space represented on the vase and the real space in which the vase was used. Indeed, the volute-krater depicted under one of the handles has an ambiguous function: it may be part of the ransom or it may just indicate the context of symposium where the cup itself was manipulated and admired. In both cases, it serves as the transition point between the two sides of the vase representing the encounter between Achilles and Priam followed by Hermes at the head of a long procession of gift-bearers. A door and a *klismos* with a leather seat cover, most probably intended for Priam,<sup>52</sup> mark the end of the narration under the other handle.

As pointed out above, prestigious objects displayed beneath the handle are semantically highlighted despite being visually marginalised within the architecture of the vase. This is particularly true for those objects which are emblazoned in the area defined by the arched handles of cups. In some cases, the fact that these objects bear a variegated decor accentuates their ornamentality, while a reserved patch of red colour above them creates a spotlight effect. On a cup by the Brygos Painter (c. 490–480 BC),<sup>53</sup> for example, we see a Corinthian helmet and a shield under one handle, and a pair of greaves under the other (Fig. 6.6): these objects constitute central motifs, allowing viewers to identify the two scenes on of the cup, namely as the quarrel over the arms of Achilles on one side, and the resulting vote to determine ownership on the other. Like the arms of Heracles represented on the stamnos by the Harrow Painter (above, 153), the arms of Achilles here attract the viewer's attention not only by their isolation in the handle area, but also by their elaborate craftsmanship – as evidenced by the chequer-board pattern on the caul of the helmet and the detailed modelling of the greaves.<sup>54</sup>

By definition, as we have emphasised, the handle area is a disjoining configuration within the architecture of the vase. But the important contribution of handle

<sup>49</sup> Lissarrague 1987, 27.

<sup>50</sup> Chestnut Hill, Boston College, McMullen Museum of Art; BAPD 2573; Kunisch 1997, n. 47, Plate 21.

<sup>51</sup> New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Shelby White and Leon Levy Collection; BAPD 204333; *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 399; *Add*<sup>2</sup> 230; von Bothmer (ed.) 1991, 158–161, n. 118.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Hom. *Il.* 24.578.

<sup>53</sup> London, British Museum E69; BAPD 203901; *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 369.2; *Para* 365; *Add*<sup>2</sup> 224.

<sup>54</sup> For a detailed description of the arms' decoration, see CVA, London, British Museum 9, 58.



Fig. 6.6: Cup by the Brygos Painter, c. 490–480 BC, London, British Museum E69.

motifs in joining the two sides of a vase together is nicely illustrated by the exterior of a cup signed by Peithinos (c. 500 BC) that depicts a series of erotic encounters (Fig. 6.7).<sup>55</sup> While a hunting dog beneath one handle guides the viewer's eye from the side of homosexual wooing to the side of heterosexual courtship, an elaborate stool – covered by a lion skin – marks the end of the scene beneath the opposite handle. Both elements are signs that affirm the social status and wealth of the male lovers.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, the dog and the lion skin suggest that amorous courtship is itself a kind of hunt: the object of desire, girl or boy, is likened to a wild animal that the lover, as predator, has to capture.<sup>57</sup> By extension, it is worth noting that the interior of the cup represents the wrestling match between Peleus and Thetis (who tries to escape her attacker by taking the form of a snake and a lion, the latter clearly echoing the lion skin on the cup's exterior).

On a cup by Makron portraying a divine assembly (c. 490–480 BC),<sup>58</sup> elegant spotted felines (cheetahs or panthers) walk beneath the handles and guide the spectator's eye from left to right. Even though it is not clear if they are linked to Dionysus (who occupies the centre of one side), these displayed animals at once advertise wealth, exotic flamboyance and power;<sup>59</sup> at the same time, they create an effect of *poikilia*, enhanced by the cloth-covered folding chairs and the metallic vases.

55 Berlin, Antikensammlung F2279; BAPD 200977; ARV<sup>2</sup> 115.2; *Para* 332; *Add*<sup>2</sup> 174.

56 On dogs in ancient texts and imagery, see Calder 2011, 81–89.

57 On the link between hunting and erotic desire, see Schnapp 1997, 247–257 and 337–354.

58 Bochum, Kunstsammlungen der Ruhr-Universität S1062; BAPD 13378; CVA, Bochum, Kunstsammlungen der Ruhr-Universität 2, Kunstsammlungen, Plate 42.

59 On felines in ancient texts and imagery, see Calder 2011, 87–89.



**Fig. 6.7:** Cup signed by Peithinos, c. 500 BC, Berlin, Antikensammlung F2279.

All these elements create a visual richness, encouraging the viewer to engage in a detailed examination of both scenes.

One category of handle motifs that has not been mentioned so far is that of hybrid creatures which may operate (just as animals) both as ornaments and polyvalent signs. A cup attributed to the Euergides Painter (c. 510 BC)<sup>60</sup> shows Peleus seizing Thetis on one side and Hermes and Nereids running towards Nereus on the other. The scenes are framed by two winged hippocamps: the hippocamps face inwards, and their tails cross each other between the handle attachments so as to form an elaborate ornament. Even though the seahorses do not participate actively in the scene, their presence evokes a maritime landscape and conveys the idea of velocity.

An animal can also operate as the personal signature of a painter or a potter. So it is, for example, that the Theseus Painter, chief painter of the Heron Class, ‘signs’ his skyphoi with a bird (heron or crane) beneath the handles – as, for instance, on a skyphos (c. 500 BC) in New York which shows scenes of male wrestling on each of its sides.<sup>61</sup> The fact that the bird is painted white enhances its particular status as a trademark. In general, the presence of the bird on the painter’s skyphoi is not connected to the main scenes;<sup>62</sup> however, it might actually refer to other vases produced

<sup>60</sup> London, British Museum E9; BAPD 200738; *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 89.13; *Add*<sup>2</sup> 170.

<sup>61</sup> New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 06.1021.49; BAPD 306785; *ABV* 703; *Add*<sup>2</sup> 129.

<sup>62</sup> The Theseus Painter also uses a goat as a signature. On the Heron Class, see *ABV* 205, 617.

in the same workshop. If this is true, then the handle motifs do not only link the different scenes of a vase, but also forge an association between different vases.<sup>63</sup>

The dolphin, often found beneath the handles of the vases by the Leafless Group, is another example of such signature-motifs.<sup>64</sup> But this hallmark function does not exclude a semantic function within the vase's figurative programme. Indeed, beneath each handle of an eye-cup in Leiden (c. 520–510 BC) that shows Dionysus and satyrs,<sup>65</sup> a leaping dolphin appears with an arching back that echoes the form of the handles itself; a kind of necklace is also added to accentuate the ornamental properties. The presence of the dolphins contributes to the sympotic sea imagery: it is well known that Greeks compared the company of a symposium with that of a ship – and by extension the behaviour of symposiasts with sailing and rowing, or indeed intoxication from wine with seasickness.<sup>66</sup> This also explains why we sometimes find ships under the handles of cups.<sup>67</sup>

So far in this chapter, I have tried to systematise the great variety of handle motifs and explain their visual and semantic effects. But numerous examples evade such attempts to tie down meaning. If there is common ground between the examples that follow, rather, it is surely their unexpected presence. Consider first a cup attributed to the Amasis Painter (c. 520 BC):<sup>68</sup> on one side two reclining satyr-like revellers are shown masturbating; on the other an eye-siren points at a dog defecating between the attachments of the handles (Fig. 6.8). The same motif appears under the other handle. The obscenity of the dogs is doubled by the fact that, in Attic comedy, the word *kyôn* could refer to the phallus.<sup>69</sup> In this sense, these defecating dogs, both looking towards the eye-siren but linked to the masturbation scene, constitute a 'marginalised' visual joke that would certainly provoke surprise and hilarity among the pot's users.

Also unexpected is the presence of insects in the handle area. The exterior of a cup signed by the potter Pamphaios and attributed to the Nikosthenes Painter (c. 520–500 BC)<sup>70</sup> shows Heracles and Iolaos fighting against the centaurs on one side

<sup>63</sup> It should be noted here that the handle area receives not only 'figurative trademarks' but also real signatures: the potter Hischylos signs beneath the handle; the potters Euphronios, Hieron, Brygos and Charinos sign on the handle of their vases. These signatures, painted or incised, are usually written in a tightly delicate and decorative way; their presence certainly distinguishes the handle area. More generally on potters' signatures, see Cohen 1991 – along with e. g. Hurwit 2015, 71–96 (with review and further bibliography in Squire 2017).

<sup>64</sup> On the Leafless Group, see *ABV* 632–654, 711–713, 716; *Para* 310–314, 520; *Add<sup>2</sup>* 145–146. A leaf, a flying bird or a drinking horn may also figure as handle 'signatures' of the Leafless Group.

<sup>65</sup> Leiden, Rijksmuseum van Oudheden PC14; BAPD 769; CVA Leiden 2, 10, Plates 62.4–6, 63.2.

<sup>66</sup> On sympotic sea imagery, see Lissarrague 1987, 104–118.

<sup>67</sup> See, for example, an eye-cup in Copenhagen (Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek 3385; BAPD 340395; *Para* 104; *Add<sup>2</sup>* 57).

<sup>68</sup> Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 10.651; BAPD 310515; *ABV* 157.86; *Para* 65; *Add<sup>2</sup>* 46.

<sup>69</sup> Henderson 1991, 127, 133.

<sup>70</sup> Los Angeles, County Museum 50.8.15; BAPD 201039; *ARV<sup>2</sup>* 125.11, 128; *Add<sup>2</sup>* 176.



**Fig. 6.8:** Cup by the Amasis Painter, c. 520 BC, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 10.651.

and, on the reverse, Hermes, Heracles and Athena harnessing a chariot. An ivy leaf stands beneath one handle, a grasshopper or a locust (*akris*)<sup>71</sup> beneath the other. Both of the insects are enlarged. The presence of the ivy leaf has a clear-cut meaning: it is a Dionysian sign, accentuating the cup's use in the symposium. The presence of the grasshopper (which looks on towards the Centauromachy scene) is less easy to explain. It may be that the insect gives the scene a natural context, rather like the tree depicted behind Heracles. The fact that the grasshopper stridulates, 'sings' and 'makes music with its wings'<sup>72</sup> may further explain this placement: after all, Attic viewers termed the handles of vases 'ears' (*ta ôta* in ancient Greek).<sup>73</sup> Finally, because it eats plants, the grasshopper may convey an idea of destruction and harm,<sup>74</sup> a very suitable idea given the Centauromachy scene of our cup.

<sup>71</sup> Apparently, Greeks did not draw a distinction between grasshoppers, crickets and locusts, and some poets even confused grasshoppers with cicadas: Davies-Kathirithamby 1986, 134.

<sup>72</sup> Davies-Kathirithamby 1986, 136–137.

<sup>73</sup> I owe this remark to Ludi Chazalon – who is also interested in the handle area of Greek vases: see Chazalon 2013. Indeed, on an amphora in Oxford, a satyr plays the lyre below one of the handles (Ashmolean Museum 1965.125; BAPD 352183; *Para* 295; *Add<sup>2</sup>* 140). See also an amphora in London (British Museum B264; BAPD 320322; *ABV* 288.19; *Add<sup>2</sup>* 75) and a cup fragment in Paris (Musée du Louvre CA1778; BAPD 302599; *ABV* 201; *Add<sup>2</sup>* 54), both showing a satyr playing aulos.

<sup>74</sup> Davies-Kathirithamby 1986, 139–141. Note that our grasshopper stands on the palmette chain.



A cup in the manner of the Nikosthenes Painter (c. 520–510 BC)<sup>75</sup> shows a Dionysian procession with satyrs and maenads extending over both sides. Under one handle, we find a bee or wasp (*melissa/apis* or *sphêx*)<sup>76</sup> looking towards another scene where a woman mounts a chariot. Once again, it is difficult to decipher the role of the bee, especially since it operates as a polyvalent sign. Wild bees often feature in countryside descriptions in Greek literature;<sup>77</sup> consequently, it is possible that our bee, standing above the palmette chain, enhances the impression of a natural context, rather like the grasshopper on the Pamphaios cup. Like grasshoppers, bees likewise produce a very characteristic sound, which may also explain the bee's presence below the cup's 'ear'.<sup>78</sup> Finally, the bee may convey Dionysian overtones, when we remember that the infant Dionysus was nurtured on honey.<sup>79</sup>

The presence of these insects once again returns us to the question of scale. While, in general, the reduced height of the area beneath the handles invites the painter to depict miniaturised figures and objects in order to make them fit, we find the exact opposite phenomenon here: the size of the insects has been enlarged – which proves that the handle area is a space that is variable in scale. In addition, the disproportionate presence of these normally tiny creatures together with their visual isolation would undoubtedly stimulate and direct the attention of viewers towards them.

What about floral elements? Floral elements – and especially palmettes – are the most common handle motifs; traditionally, they have been judged to play a purely ornamental function in framing the main figural scene. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, however, floral elements escape our modern and fictitious categories by operating in multiple ways: as ornaments, as narrative agents, and as polyvalent signs.<sup>80</sup> The following two examples suffice to suggest this polytropic nature.

Consider first the exterior scenes of a cup by the Brygos Painter (c. 490–480 BC).<sup>81</sup> The cup shows scenes from the sack of Troy: although compositionally self-contained, the scenes are linked by the figure of a fallen Trojan under one handle, just as a palmette under the other handle marks the beginning and end of the narration. Importantly, the palmette is overlapped by the figure of Astyanax fleeing to the right:

<sup>75</sup> St. Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum B3375; BAPD 9030175; CVA St. Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum 8, Plates 13–15.

<sup>76</sup> As Nitzan Levin notes, 'Greek literature often associates, compares and confuses the two species. Thus, it is not surprising to find a similar confusion in the work of vase painters of the sixth century' (Levin 2016, 83). On bees and wasps in antiquity, see also Davies-Kathirithamby 1986, 47–83.

<sup>77</sup> Davies-Kathirithamby 1986, 51.

<sup>78</sup> Davies-Kathirithamby 1986, 53–54 and 70–72.

<sup>79</sup> Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 4.1132–1136.

<sup>80</sup> On floral elements as ornaments and polyvalent signs, see Kéi 2007; 2008; 2015; 2016; cf. also the discussion of the 'Euphorbus Plate' in the introduction to this volume (3–16), as well as the discussions of the Eleusis amphora by both Grethlein and Neer.

<sup>81</sup> Paris, Musée du Louvre G152; BAPD 203900; ARV<sup>2</sup> 369.1; *Para* 365; *Add*<sup>2</sup> 224.

it is as if the palmette were not there. Furthermore, the fact that Astyanax refuses to recognise the limit of the scene increases his agony and the overall dramatic tension of the imagery.<sup>82</sup> In other words, the palmette is not only an ornament but also a narrative operator.

Even more interesting is a cup by Makron (c. 490–480 BC), now in Berlin.<sup>83</sup> The handle areas framing the main scene of the cup, which shows the Judgment of Paris, are occupied by goats and the rock on which Paris is seated on one side, and by a stylised palmette garland on the other (Fig. 6.9). Here, we have two different logics of representation: one that is figurative (the rock and the goats), and one that is rather more ornamental (the palmette garland). Yet both of these logics have semantic implications. The rock and the goats characterise Paris as a shepherd.<sup>84</sup> In a similar way, the palmettes qualify Aphrodite: as adornments, they denote her beauty, her charm, her sweet scent, her *charis*.<sup>85</sup> It is as if the palmette garland is inextricably interwoven with Aphrodite, who is shown surrounded by four fluttering Erotes holding red floral tendrils. After all, Aphrodite is the winner of Paris' judging – and therefore merits the viewer's undivided attention. In this particular case, the palmettes are again not just ornaments, but also potential narrative agents and signs. By contrast, on the other side of the cup – which shows Paris leading Helen away – the rock, goats and palmettes lose their semantic potency since they are not really related to the figures.

There are a few cases where the handle actively participates in the narration. On a skyphos by the Heron Class close to the style of the Theseus Painter (c. 500–490 BC),<sup>86</sup> Heracles has hung his lion skin on the handle as if it were a tree branch. Likewise, on a contemporary cup showing Heracles' fight against Antaios, the hero's club leans against the handle.<sup>87</sup> Finally, on a cup by Onesimos (c. 500–480 BC),<sup>88</sup> a satyr is preparing himself to attack a maenad by bracing his foot against the handle. In all cases, the handle is to be considered as a real figurative element. This confirms, from a different perspective, what has already been observed in various ways: although marginal within the vase's architecture, the handle area is interacting closely with the main pictorial field, asserting the continuity between figure and ornament.

I will conclude with a group of vases on which we find a particular effect: in these cases, the only field occupied by figures is the area beneath the handles, while the

<sup>82</sup> Astyanax reappears on the other side of the vase: his dead body is held in the hands of Neoptolemus.

<sup>83</sup> Berlin, Antikensammlung F2291; BAPD 204685; ARV<sup>2</sup> 459.4, 481; *Para* 377; *Add<sup>2</sup>* 244.

<sup>84</sup> On 'landscape' elements as extensions of figures, see Dietrich 2010.

<sup>85</sup> On floral elements and flowers, see above, n. 80.

<sup>86</sup> Athens, National Archaeological Museum 13907; BAPD 46504; CVA Athens, National Museum 4, Plates 44.1–4. Beneath the other handle of the vase is a tree.

<sup>87</sup> Athens, National Archaeological Museum 1666; BAPD 350911; CVA Athens, National Museum 1, III.I.C.4, Plates 4–5. On this cup, see Dietrich 2010, 118–120, 279–308 (esp. 297–298).

<sup>88</sup> Aleria, Musée Archeologique 61.35; BAPD 275179; ARV<sup>2</sup> 1645.9bis; *Para* 359; *Add<sup>2</sup>* 215.



Fig. 6.9: Cup by Makron, c. 490–480 BC, Berlin, Antikensammlung F2291.

rest of the vase is decorated with an abstract ‘textile’ pattern.<sup>89</sup> The Beldam Workshop and the Marlay Group particularly favour this kind of ornamentation. Thus, a skyphos by the Beldam Workshop (c. 450 BC)<sup>90</sup> is mainly decorated with the abstract pattern of a chequerboard, complete with a laurel wreath on the rim, a frontal owl below the vertical handle and a panther and two birds below the horizontal handle. A cup attributed to the Lid Painter (c. 440–430 BC)<sup>91</sup> is decorated with a panel of lozenges flanked by two panels of inverted black lotus buds while the handle area is occupied by a goat in silhouette. In these cases, should the motifs be designated as ‘superfluous’, ‘accessories’ or ‘peripheral’? Indeed, how do the motifs of the handle zone relate to the design of the main part of the vase?

<sup>89</sup> On such patterns, cf. also Lissarrague’s chapter in this volume.

<sup>90</sup> London, British Museum E151; BAPD 16815; CVA London, British Museum 4, III.Ic.5, Plates 32.11a–d.

<sup>91</sup> London, British Museum 1917.0726.2; BAPD 216281; ARV<sup>2</sup> 1283.13. See also a cup by the same painter in Madrid (Museo Arqueológico Nacional, coll. Varez Fisa 1999.99.83; BAPD 44388).

Allow me to end this chapter by bringing together some of my overarching arguments. Throughout, I have been arguing that what we traditionally call the ‘figurative’ and ‘ornamental’ registers on Attic vases – as indeed the ‘image’ and ‘frame’ of the painted pot – amount to fictitious, anachronistic western categories, conceived in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for the purposes of classification and chronology. Ever since the Enlightenment, the majority of specialist scholars have considered these two categories as existing in a dialectical relationship: the former has been thought to occupy the centre of the pictorial field and to bear meaning; by contrast, the latter has been relegated to the margins and deemed parergonal. This dichotomous approach to Attic vase-painting – reflecting as it does an idea of the flat, gilt-framed canvas – implies a hierarchisation based on semantic density: the ‘ornamental register’ or ‘frame’ of the vase is considered to be, if not entirely meaningless, at least inferior to its ‘figurative register’ or ‘image’.

The aim of my chapter has been to show that, though visually less accessible, the area beneath the handles could be no less semantically loaded than the main pictorial field. By choosing elements with enriching, narrative and sometimes multi-layered semantic properties, Attic painters put the sub-handle area to clever use, while also assuring a continuity between ‘figurative’ and ‘ornamental’ elements. Far from being trivial space-fillers, these handle motifs – whether figures, objects or floral elements – perform an adverbial function: they underscore, heighten, clarify or qualify the meaning of the scenes that they frame. At the same time, they influence the process of visual reception in various ways: they separate or interconnect the two sides of a vase; they provide further guidance for the eyes of a viewer; they amount to eye-catching details; and sometimes they create a surprising effect. In certain cases, despite their physical marginality, the motifs under the handles even amount to the central motifs of a pot, contributing in a very active way to the visual experience of the vase. In my eyes, at least, there can therefore be no doubt: our western and academic categories of ‘ornament’ and ‘figure’ not only prevent the modern viewer from having a more complete appreciation of the vase as a whole, but also deprive him of the aesthetic and intellectual pleasure that this may engender.

## Abbreviations

ABV: Beazley, J. D. (1956) *Attic Black-Figure Vase-Painters*. Oxford.

Add<sup>2</sup>: Carpenter T. H., Mannack, T. and Mendonca, M. (1989) *Beazley Addenda: Additional References to Attic Black-figure Vase-painters, Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters and Paralipomena*, 2nd edn. Oxford.

ARV<sup>2</sup>: Beazley, J. D. (1963) *Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters*, 2nd edn. Oxford.

BAPD: Beazley Archive Pottery Database (cf. [www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/index.htm](http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/index.htm)).

CVA: (1922–) *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum* (cf. <http://www.cvaonline.org/cva/Countrylist.htm>).

LIMC: (1981–1997) *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*. Zurich and Munich.

Para: Beazley, J. D. (1971) *Paralipomena: Additions to Attic Black-Figure Vase-Painters and to Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters*. Oxford.

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## Image credits

- Fig. 6.1: After CVA Bochum, Kunstsammlungen der Ruhr-Universität 1, Plate 26.1.
- Fig. 6.2: Photograph by Nikolina Kéi.
- Fig. 6.3: Photograph by Nikolina Kéi.
- Fig. 6.4a: Photograph by Nikolina Kéi.
- Fig. 6.4b: Photograph by Nikolina Kéi.
- Fig. 6.5: After LIMC 1.2, s. v. 'Achilles', no. 101.
- Fig. 6.6: After CVA, London, British Museum 9, Plate. 61a.
- Fig. 6.7: After Backe-Dahmen, Kästner and Schwarzmaier 2010, fig. 51.
- Fig. 6.8: After CVA Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 2, Plate 101.3.
- Fig. 6.9: Photograph by Nikolina Kéi.

Nikolaus Dietrich

## Order and contingency in Archaic Greek ornament and figure\*

Archaic Greek art has a particular affinity with ornament. This sentiment could be found in almost any textbook book on Greek art.<sup>1</sup> It seems to give an accurate description of many formal features of Archaic styles. But much more importantly, it also provides us with a powerful means of differentiating Archaic art from the allegedly more properly ‘figurative’ art of the Classical period.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the idea of ornamental Archaic style helps us indirectly to derive our understanding of the Classical style, with all its ‘naturalistic’ elements. Thus, by deconstructing the idea of ornamental Archaic art – as I shall try to do in this chapter – we stand to gain a better understanding of Classical naturalism.

In the context of a book tackling the presumed self-evident and clear-cut opposition between ornament and figure, the reader might well expect me to show that the concepts of ‘ornamental’ Archaic art and purely ‘figurative’ Classical art are mistaken. Ancient views of Archaic and Classical art would certainly support a denial of this traditional, post-Neoclassical view. Indeed, the sculptural adornment of a sanctuary, or for that matter the painted decoration of a sympotic vase, could be described as *kosmos*, be it of Archaic or Classical date.<sup>3</sup> However, my aim in the following discussion is not to erase difference, nor simply to put all Archaic and Classical art under an all-embracing idea of ancient *kosmos* – not because this undifferentiated view would necessarily be wrong, but because it would short-circuit the actual problem: namely, to understand why Greek figurative art seemingly wipes out, in the beginning of the fifth century BC, everything that we perceive to be ornamental in Archaic times, even though (broadly speaking) *kosmêsis* remains one of the main functions of figurative art in Classical times wherever it is encountered.<sup>4</sup> Instead of straightforwardly asking whether a particular affinity to ornament is or is not characteristic of Archaic art,

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\* I would like to thank Georg Gerleigner and Michael Squire for their help with correcting and improving my English: all remaining mistakes are my own.

1 See e.g. Hurwit 1985, 23–25.

2 See on this Dietrich 2011, 16–17.

3 For discussions, see the chapters in this volume by e.g. Squire, Hölscher, Barham and Platt. On *kosmos* as the appropriate category for describing the sculptural adornment of Greek temples, see Marconi 2004. On *kosmos* in the context of Attic vases and their decoration, see Haug 2015, 22–24 (with n. 63), 211 (on Geometric and Protoattic pottery); Kéi forthcoming.

4 See T. Hölscher 2015, 38–47; compare also in particular the chapters in this volume by Hölscher and Lissarrague. For a very different take on this topic of making images look like they were not actually ‘made’ by art, see Platt’s chapter in this volume – albeit in the context of Roman Stoic philosophical discourse.

I shall therefore try to spell out the concepts of the ornamental and the figurative underlying this modern idea of ornamental Archaic art.

I begin, in the first part of the chapter, by showing that the ornamental forms found in Archaic imagery do in fact perfectly align with a figurative reading.<sup>5</sup> Through the detailed analysis of one specific Archaic *korê* from the Athenian Acropolis, I shall then, in a second section, spell out which elements are responsible for the ornamental impression produced by Archaic sculpture in the modern eye – namely symmetry, repetition and geometric precision. These ornamental qualities were produced, I shall argue, for the basic sake of figuration. In the third section, I relate these observations on a single statue to additional parallels in Archaic sculpture. By doing so, the third section throws into relief the difficulties that these ornamental-cum-figurative forms encounter with conveying, in their mimetic depiction, what I shall call a sense of ‘contingency’. By ‘contingency’ I mean here the way in which a viewer’s experiencing of the concrete appearance of an image depends not on the artist’s representational intentions, but on a causality intrinsic to the mimetically produced reality itself; it is as if – simply put – the figure was not *made* to look the way it looks, but just happened to *be* this way.<sup>6</sup> The subsequent fourth section in my argument will further analyse the system of pattern and deviation on which Archaic sculpture’s producing of figurative meaning is based. I will showcase the dynamic workings of Archaic sculpture, resulting in ever more complex patterns, ornamental splendour and mimetically ‘rich’ figurations during the course of the sixth century BC. However, as my fifth and final section will show, there is an inherent instability in this dynamic Archaic system of ornamental-cum-figurative *mimêsis*: the continuous search for new ways to cope with the manifold contingencies of reality re-created in the medium of sculpture slowly began to undermine this Archaic system of pattern and deviation, the functioning of which was based on the rule that every deviation *has to* point to a specific depictive intention by the sculptor (thus ruling out the very idea of a causality intrinsic to the mimetically produced image). This ultimately resulted, in the early fifth century BC, in the system’s collapse and a rather radical change in mimetic strategy. While the highly ornamental quality (that we tend to see) in Archaic sculpture is lost, early Classical sculpture eventually succeeds in producing the sense of contingency so crucial for (what we experience as) realistic art. At the same time, one may still uphold the idea that Archaic and Classical sculpture basically pursued the same ornamental-cum-figurative end, the differences between them residing more in the means of achieving this end.

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<sup>5</sup> On this, see Dietrich 2011, 16–27.

<sup>6</sup> I am aware of the fact that this does not correspond to the normal use of this term in English. For want a better translation, ‘contingency’ shall stand as an equivalent to the German ‘Zufälligkeit’: that is, something that is dependent on mere coincidence (i.e. on some cause irrelevant in a given context). ‘Contingency’, in short, refers to something that is a mere ‘disturbance’ of no particular importance in a meaningful whole.



## Ornamental forms and figurative readings in Archaic sculpture: A perfect match

In order to illustrate my first point about the figurative nature of what can seem to be purely formalistic ornamental forms in Archaic art, there is perhaps no better example than the ‘twin’-*korai* dedicated by Cheramyes in the Heraion of Samos in the second quarter of the sixth century, and now on display in the Louvre and in the museum of Vathy (Figs. 7.1a–b).<sup>7</sup> The abundance of parallel folds on the chiton and mantle (set one against the other in a clear angle), the regular cylindrical overall plastic form of each statue, its strict verticality: all these features seem to strive for abstract formalism, at least for the viewer in the twenty-first century, with the experience of abstract modern art in the back of his mind. But as I have argued elsewhere, this statue is full of details that aim at very specific elements of the body, its clothing and the forces to which the garment is subjected by the complex way in which it is draped around the body.<sup>8</sup> We might think we are dealing here with a purely abstract sense of formal beauty, but I think the forms can be linked with rather more concrete physical factors. This is particularly clear when it comes to the parallel folds inscribed into the surface of the mantle. Every single one of them can indeed be traced back to the various buttons by which the mantle is tied on the right shoulder. Thus, the oblique direction of the mantle folds, themselves contrasting with the verticality of the chiton folds, has a concrete mechanical explanation; it is not merely a matter of formal composition. One might even ask whether there is such a thing as composition in this rendering. When it comes to the intelligibility of single folds within the system of mechanical tensions that act on the garment, the Cheramyes-*korai* and other Archaic draped figures outclass by far later Classical draped figures. For the so-called Hera Borghese or any other late-fifth-century draped figure, one would not be able to give an account of every single fold and explain the specific shape it took.

This is not to say that the folds of the Cheramyes-*korai* do not produce an ornamental effect. My point, rather, is that this ornamental quality does not stand in any kind of exclusive opposition to figurative meaning. In principle, the same is true for all Archaic *korai*, or so I want to claim. The antithesis between ornamental formalism and figurative meaning does not hold in Archaic art: the presumed purely ornamental forms found on richly carved Archaic *korai* prove to be directly linked to figurative

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<sup>7</sup> Paris, Louvre 686, and Samos, Museum Vathy 1750. Detailed discussion of the Louvre *korê* can be found in Freyer-Schauenburg 1974, 21–7, no. 6; for discussion of the ‘new’ *korê* excavated in 1984 (together with the Louvre *korê*), see Kyrieleis 1995 – with earlier references at p. 7, nn. 1 and 4. More recent discussions include Hamiaux 2001, 50–52; Romilly and Lacarrière 2001; Kreikenbom 2002, 152–156; Karakasi 2003, Plate 6, no. 6A, 13–27; Dietrich 2011, 16–20 and Dietrich 2017, 302–305. For a recent bibliographic review, see Franssen 2011, 461, cat. no. A5 and A6.

<sup>8</sup> See above, n. 5.



**Figs. 7.1a–b:** Vathy, Museum 1750: Samian *korê*, c. 570–560 BC.



b

meaning. This obviously seems consistent with the ancient concept of *kosmos*, where beautiful order is intrinsically linked to significance.

## A closer look at Archaic ‘ornamentality’: What does it comprise, and what is it about?

I might substantiate this initial argument with many more examples, taken from different artistic media, in order to show that Archaic imagery is basically doing the same thing as its later Classical counterpart, driven by the same mimetic impulse (and far removed from any abstract and formalist *Kunstwollen*). But even were I to do so, I would certainly not succeed in blurring the clear-cut distinction that separates Archaic and Classical styles in the eyes of the modern beholder – and, incidentally, arguably in the eyes of the ancient beholder too.<sup>9</sup> To put the issue more simply: no matter what discursive effort I might invest, Archaic art would still seem to us more ornamental and less lifelike than Classical art. Among the many explanations that one might advance for explaining this surprising fact – and in order to rescue the idea (to which I stick!) that every division of art-historical epochs is essentially arbitrary – I would like to focus here on one specific aspect, which marks an important (though still continuous) change in figurative strategy concerning what I would call the economics of order and the suggestion of contingency. What I actually mean by this will become clearer in the course of this chapter.

But let me begin with a closer look at one standard Archaic *korē* from the Athenian Acropolis: the smaller-than-life-size *korē* Acropolis 672, dated to c. 530–520 BC (Figs. 7.2a–b).<sup>10</sup> What elements are responsible for the impression of ornamentality

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<sup>9</sup> Indeed, out of all the art-historical divisions that classical archaeology conventionally posits, that between Archaic and Classical art, or more generally that between Archaic art and art deemed no longer Archaic, is arguably the one that seems to have somehow been self-evident for ancient viewers (even though it might well be argued that what we conceive as early Classical art was grouped together with Archaic art and not, as we do, with later Classical art by the ancient viewer: Hallett 2012, 86–91). A telling example for this ‘otherness’ of Archaic sculpture felt by later viewers may be the descriptions of Archaic sculptures found in Pausanias, as e.g. of the description of the statue of the pankratiast Arrichion on the agora of Phigalia (Paus. 8.40.1–2). More generally, the distinct character of Archaic art, at least from the point of view of post-Archaic ancient viewers, is evident from the widespread phenomenon of intentional ‘archaising’ styles in post-Archaic Greek and Roman imagery (see most recently Elsner 2017) – a phenomenon that begins almost at the same time as ‘true’ Archaic art ends. On archaistic art in the fifth century BC, see F. Hölscher 2010.

<sup>10</sup> Athens, Acropolis Museum 672; see Langlotz in Schrader 1939, 90–91, no. 42, Plates 59 and 103; Richter 1968, 76, no. 118, fig. 373–376; Trianti 1998, 117, figs. 92–94; Karakasi 2003, 79, 118, 127, Plates 150–151; Brinkmann 2003a, cat. 93 (for colour). See Brüggemann and Meyer 2007, 58, cat. no. 35, and Franssen 2011, 485, cat. no. B 30 for further bibliography.

with which this depiction of a young maiden provides us, at least when compared with Classical images of draped figures? Before trying to answer this question, I should clarify that by talking of ornamentality, I will not attempt here to tackle an ancient concept of *kosmos*; instead, I will refer to the formal principles that we nowadays usually associate with ornament, as largely fixed by nineteenth-century debates about ‘good ornament’ – formal principles that derive from works such as Owen Jones’ influential *Grammar of Ornament* (first published in 1856).<sup>11</sup>

## Symmetry

One such formal principle is symmetry (a principle already discussed in an architectural context within Tonio Hölscher’s contribution to this volume). Before enumerating the symmetric features found on *korê* Acropolis 672, it is important to emphasise first the *asymmetry* of its overall design. Indeed, the way the mantle knotted on the left shoulder is draped around the body causes the drapery to fall obliquely over the chest and to hang much further down at the left side than it does on the right.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the conventional gesture of grasping the chiton with the right hand confers on the whole lower part of the draped body a most asymmetric design. Finally, the outstretched left arm, formerly holding some attribute, also introduces asymmetry into the statue’s overall structure. Nevertheless, the statue’s open asymmetry cannot conceal some elements of symmetry that strongly conflict with the way in which later fifth-century sculpture is designed. These are especially found on the *korê*’s head and hair.<sup>13</sup> The hair falling down on the front of the body is laid out in strictly symmetric strands on either side. What is striking here is not the fact that the same number of

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<sup>11</sup> See the Plates in Jones 1856. Although Jones differentiates in his presentation between cultures and epochs, he clearly aims at articulating the universal principles that rule ‘good ornament’. Indeed, this is spelled out in his 37 propositions in the opening pages of the book (4–6). Despite the book’s apparent historicist approach, ornamentality is dealt with as a transcultural category. By assigning (or indeed denying) ornamental qualities to designed objects – and doing so regardless of their cultural/historical context, as so often happens – we have inherited much of this nineteenth-century approach. On nineteenth-century debates on ornament, cf. Gombrich 1979; Schafer 2003.

<sup>12</sup> This so-called ‘ionischer Schrägmantel’ is, of course, a well-known feature of most late Archaic *korai*. On this piece of clothing in its Attic variant, see Schmaltz 1998, 12–20 (with further bibliography): the author emphasises the asymmetry in the design of Attic *korai* (25). On the invention of the oblique mantle within the history of fashion, see Junker and Tauchert 2015 (with review in Dietrich 2015). More generally on the clothing of Archaic *korai*, see e.g. Bieber 1928, 19–24; Pekridou-Gorecki 1989, 71–100; Harrison 1991, 231–236; Cleland 2007. On Archaic drapery, see also the insightful comments in Neer 2010, 105–124.

<sup>13</sup> On hairstyles of Archaic *korai* from the Acropolis, see Stieber 2004, 63–68. On the technical process of sculpting hair, which is more relevant to the present context, see Brinkmann 1998. On the carving of hair in Archaic sculpture, see also Dietrich 2017, 292–294.



**Figs. 7.2a–b:** Athens, Acropolis Museum 672: Attic *korê*, c. 530–520 BC.



b

four strands has been arranged in a similar manner on either side. This would count for the *korai* of the Erechtheion, too, and can be put down to the well-arranged and graceful appearance of these maidens. The feature might thus support a simple iconographical explanation, one that refers to the depiction's *content*. It is not the *similarity* but rather the *sameness* of the four strands on either side that is striking. Even more noteworthy in this respect is the hair at the maiden's back. Here, the twelve strands have what could literally be called a 'symmetry axis'. Technically, this axis is a direct result of the way in which the sculptor singled out the strands: starting from an overall volume of hair with horizontal 'waves', as is still seen on the back of the head, left in a former working stage, the sculptor then stepped up this continuous wavy surface from either side, so as to obtain single strands. In the middle of the mass of hair, where the two rows of strands meet, this carving procedure produces two oblique surfaces at a slight angle to one another, and it is this which (geometrically speaking) constitutes a symmetry axis. In order to break this perfect symmetry, the sculptor should have altered his systematic procedure of carving at some point. But he apparently did not see any reason to do so. Thus, the perfect symmetry in the depiction of hair is not the result of any positive decision by the sculptor to create symmetry, but rather the result of lacking the will to create *asymmetry*. We will return to this crucial point a little later.

## Repetition

Another formal principle that we tend to associate with ornament is the iterative repetition of single formal features.<sup>14</sup> Such repetition is found all over our *korê*. Take for example the zigzagging hem of the mantle, resulting as it does from the oblique fall of the garment. Another example would be the folds incised into the surface of the chiton on the legs, where the garment is pulled to one side. These folds all repeat a similar bow-like form. On the upper part of the chiton on the chest, the surface is filled with ever-repeating wavy folds. Similar wavy folds originate from the buttons that knot together the mantle on the left shoulder and upper arm. These folds are particularly interesting in our context. Not only is the wavy form of single folds repeated over and over again, but each bunch of folds is also produced by a single button, each one associated with four folds of equal length on either side of the knotted garment. Why is this so? I would like to suggest the following explanation. Since there is no apparent reason for the tension and distortions created by the knotting of the mantle to differ from one button to another, there is no reason either to differentiate between the folds originating from each of the buttons. Just as the perfect symmetry of the hair of our

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<sup>14</sup> On repetition as a leading principle of the ornamental, see in particular Grethlein's chapter in this volume – along with Reinhardt's contribution (in the context of Roman relief sculpture).



*korê* did not reflect any positive decision by the sculptor to create symmetry, this truly fractal structure of ever-repeated formal elements does not necessarily point to any positive decision to create repetition. To support this argument, the comparison with the zigzagging hem, another repeated formal feature, is telling. Here, the repetition is much less strict and regular. Instead, the overlapping mantle-folds are increasing or decreasing in size, and changing in their design between a more rounded and a more angular form (according to their specific position on the mantle). Indeed, given the oblique knotting of the rectangular mantle, the concrete fall of the garment differs from fold to fold, and the sculptor has obviously tried very hard to render these differences by ever-varying the zigzagging hem. If the sculptor had sought formal repetition for its own sake, he would not have had any reason to take such changing fall of the garment into account.

## Geometric precision

A last formal feature often associated with ornament that I would like to mention is the importance of geometric precision.<sup>15</sup> This does not apply to every kind of ornament, and certainly has a less general validity than the important qualities of symmetry and repetition. Nevertheless, one might agree upon the basic principle that – within the modern conceptualisation of ornament and figure – geometric precision *does not* pertain to the realm of the figurative, whereas it *can be* a characteristic of ornament. However, for Archaic sculpture in general, geometric precision – meaning precision that can be measured – certainly *is* characteristic. Our *korê* Acropolis 672 provides a more or less standard example of Archaic Attic mastery in carving. But the point about geometric precision is perhaps better illustrated by some of the top-quality *korai* – as for example the very simple, but all the more ‘perfect’, *Peplos-korê* (Fig. 7.3),<sup>16</sup> or indeed the Samian *Cheramyas-korai* (Figs. 7.1a–b). The level of precision in the neat carving of such *korai* is truly astonishing. When the statue is compared with later masterpieces of ancient sculpture prized for their technical perfection, as for example the late Hellenistic or early Imperial *Laocoon* statue-group, it seems clear that the kind of perfection involved is a very different one. It would not change dramatically the aesthetic experience of the *Laocoon* whether or not an arm is held a centimetre further right or left, whether some anatomical detail is carved a

<sup>15</sup> For geometric precision as an ingredient of ‘good’ ornament, see the eighth proposition within Jones’ general principles of ornamental design (in the introduction to Jones 1856, 5).

<sup>16</sup> Athens, Acropolis Museum 679; c. 520 BC; Langlotz in Schrader 1939, 45–48, no. 4; Karakasi 2003, Plates 138–139, 244–247; Brinkmann 2003a, no. 100, figs. 100.1–100.38 and Brinkmann 2003b, 53–59 (on polychromy); Dietrich 2011, 25–27; Dietrich 2017, 294–295. For more detailed bibliographical references, see Brüggemann and Meyer 2007, 59, cat. no. 42, and Franssen 2011, 480–481, cat. no. B 15.

few millimetres deeper into the flesh, or whether the sculptors hit the chisel off target a couple of times. But such tiny details would matter considerably for the aesthetic experience of the *Peplos-korê*. The late Hellenistic masterpiece of the *Laocoon* seems to lack the *measurable perfection* typical of Archaic sculpture.<sup>17</sup> Whether this kind of perfection *really* stopped being valued in these later epochs of ancient sculpture is highly debatable.<sup>18</sup> However, from the anachronistic modern perspective that I have adopted for naming the formal features labelled as ornamental in Archaic sculpture, there can be no doubt that geometric precision is characteristic of Archaic sculpture on the one hand, and that it stops being so in later epochs on the other.

Let us sum up what has been said about the grounds for the ornamental impression that Archaic sculpture produces. Three formal features usually associated with ornament have been identified in Archaic sculpture: symmetry, repetition and geometric precision. When discussing these in connection with the example of *korê* 672 from the Athenian Acropolis, it has already emerged that we have reasons to think that at least the formal characteristics of symmetry and repetition were not necessarily sought for their own sake, but were rather the result of a certain technical procedure of figurative carving. I would like to suggest the following model of explanation. The symmetry and repetition found on our *korê* were the result of an almost over-consistent linking of form to figurative meaning. This imperative link did not allow for any formal variation within the depiction without a specific reason with regard to the subject depicted; we can thus rule out any attempt to convey contingency through breaking this frame of strict figurative intent by integrating into the depiction some of the disorder produced

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**17** That such measurable perfection would have been typical of Archaic craftsmanship seems to correspond to an ancient view too. See the anecdote reported by Diodorus Siculus (*Library*, 1.98.5–9) concerning the famous Archaic craftsmen Theodoros and his brother Telekles, whose close reliance on the Egyptian system of proportions for the depiction of the human body is said to have allowed them to fabricate together a *xoanon* of the Pythian Apollo for the Samians: each of the brothers is said to have been responsible for one half of the statue, working in two geographically disparate workshops. On putting the two halves together, the match is said to have been perfect (see Kansteiner et al. 2014, 1.183–184, no. 267). For a discussion of this anecdote in the context of a history of Archaic Greek depictions of the body, see Squire 2011, 36–39. On the *Laocoon*, see now Muth (ed.) 2017.

**18** The Hellenistic and Roman copies of Greek masterpieces are an obvious example of the importance of measurable precision in later epochs of Graeco-Roman sculpture. Even the ‘best’ copies could take considerable licence in varying the subject-matter of their models (one thinks, for example, of the Delian *Diadoumenos*, which was turned into an Apollo by placing a quiver next to the tree trunk: for discussion about the identity of the *Diadoumenos* and its copies, see Bol 1990, 206; Kreikenbom 1990, 123, n. 473; Rausa 1994, 106–107, n. 98; Ridgway 1995, 188, n. 40); alternatively, these copies could take licence in stylistic alteration (as in the case of Roman copies of the Erechtheion-*korai*: cf. Schmidt 1973). By contrast, the detail of single folds and the measurements of the body are often reproduced with astonishing precision, with different copies differing only by a few centimetres in their measurements. On the precision needed for the piecing-together of the *Laocoon*, see Filser 2017.

by the manifold contingencies of reality. To express the point more concisely: on the one hand, ornamentality was produced for the sake of figuration; on the other, and as a not necessarily intended side effect, this reduced considerably the possibilities of conveying a sense of contingency.

## Ornamental-cum-figurative forms and the manifold contingencies of reality: a difficult match

Before developing that last point further, let me turn to some further examples in order to substantiate my claim that there was no intrinsic search for symmetry and repetition in Archaic sculpture – a claim that, so far, has been based on the analysis of just one statue. At the same time, these additional examples may also serve to suggest that there were attempts at creating a sense of contingency already before the so-called ‘Greek revolution’, although these will prove to be far less successful than what we encounter later in time.

When describing *korê* 672 from the Athenian Acropolis, I emphasised the perfect symmetry of the hair on the back of the statue, in which the middle strand constitutes a kind of symmetry axis that mirrors the strands on either side. The hair of the *Peplos-korê* shows exactly the same carving technique for singling out the strands out of the overall plastic volume of the hair (Fig. 7.3).<sup>19</sup> But here the middle strand where the two rows of slightly stepped-up strands meet from either side is not exactly placed in the centre. Indeed, we count six strands on the left-hand side and only five strands on the right-hand side. Thus, this specific technical procedure for carving strands of hair *does not* necessarily go together with strict symmetry. In comparing these two takes on the same carving procedure, I would like to point to an additional telling aspect. In order to achieve such an asymmetric disposition of strands, the sculptor needed a degree of additional planning. Indeed, it did not suffice to mark the centre of the prepared volume of hair before starting the carving of the strands; rather, the sculptor had to move this central mark to the right by half the width of one strand. The asymmetric disposition of strands found on the *Peplos-korê* thus presents a kind of *lectio difficilior* – consistent with the overall higher technical quality of this most exquisite *korê*. If we have asymmetry where the greater effort was invested, and symmetry where the hair was carved through a more economic procedure, then we should assume a striving for asymmetry in Archaic sculpture. Is this a way to break an all-too-perfect order, so as to get closer to the contingency and mismatch of ‘reality’? Such a reading is worth considering, I suggest.

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<sup>19</sup> See above n. 10.



**Fig. 7.3:** Athens, Acropolis Museum 679: so-called *Peplos-korê*, c. 520 BC.

A much more blatant case of deliberate asymmetric design and avoidance of repetition – a case where classical archaeological prejudice might have expected perfectly ordered Archaic fold-pattern – is found on two large fragmentary *korai* from Chios, dating to the early sixth century (Figs. 7.4–7.5).<sup>20</sup> These statues might well be the earliest attempts known to us of depicting folds by inscribing lines into the surface of a draped body. Just as can be found on late Archaic *korai*, the folds on the chiton all originate from the buttons on the shoulder and the upper arm. These then run over the maidens' chests and back in bunches of three folds. On the back, the wavy course of these folds ends only where they meet the corresponding folds that stem from the opposite shoulder. While the three folds of each bunch separately keep a sense of strict parallelism, such parallelism is precisely not found between the different bunches. Indeed, the wavy course of two neighbouring fold-groups is sometimes neatly aligned, but at other times it is not; sometimes the groups of folds merge into closer proximity with one another before then moving away again; some waving patterns are smaller, others are larger; the size of the waves even increases and decreases within the course of a single bunch of folds. From what we see on the fragments, no simple pattern of movement emerges between the different fold-groups, not even a more complex one. On the contrary, it seems totally random. Because there is no

<sup>20</sup> Chios, Museum 225 and 226; c. 580 BC; Kreikenbom 2002, 151; Karakasi 2003, 99–101, Plates 91–93. On the Chian *korai*, see most recently Barlou 2014a, 88–90. See Brüggemann and Meyer 2007, 76, cat. no. 151–152, for further bibliography. My discussion of the two Chios *korai* here develops an idea that I briefly formulated in Dietrich 2011, 31, n. 53.

such thing as random form in an artificially made statue, this means, of course, that the sculptor had to plan this complete lack of regularity (and do so at least as carefully as he would have needed to do in order to plan regularity). Thus, we can detect here an express desire to avoid regularity. On later sculptures of the first half of the sixth century, as for example the Samian *korai* of Cheramytes (Figs. 7.1a–b) or those of the Geneleos-group,<sup>21</sup> we do not find such an intentional avoidance of regularity any more. When looking at the history of Archaic sculpture, the mimetic strategy seen on the Chian *korai* was not followed in later attempts at depicting folds on drapery. We shall keep this interesting fact in mind.

But before exploring it further, I would like to mention another case where Archaic sculpture often fails to match our expectations of being something ornamental that strives for regularity and precise repetition of form: namely, a type of monument widespread during the Archaic age, one that consists of sculptural ensembles comprising a sequence of identical figures, as for example with the well-known Terrace of the Lions at Delos. This grand dedication, sponsored by the neighbouring island of Naxos, follows the simple but effective principle of multiplying figures of the same type. The traditional dating of the monument to the late seventh century, and hence at the beginning of a subsequent tradition of dedicating large-scale marble sculpture, has recently been challenged.<sup>22</sup> In any case, though, the single lions conspicuously vary in size, ranging from 2.20 to 2.95 metres in length, and from 1.48 and 1.72 metres in height.<sup>23</sup> The badly damaged state of conservation of the statues does not permit any closer analysis of differences between them. But such differences can be nicely studied on another large group of similar statues found in a late Archaic precinct along the Sacred Way from Miletus to Didyma.<sup>24</sup> The sphinxes that stand here in a row on a wall facing the Sacred Way all share a similar general typology, yet they also reveal different surface details: this can be seen on four (from an original group of six) statues which preserve significant remains. Some have rather few but larger feathers on their wings; others have significantly more numerous but thinner feath-

<sup>21</sup> Berlin, Antikensammlung 1739 (*Ornithe*) and Vathy, Museum 768 and I 134 (*Philippe*); c. 560–550 BC, Freyer-Schauenburg 1974, 106–130; Karakasi 2003, Plates 24–29. For further bibliography, see Brüggemann and Meyer 2007, 76, cat. no. 168 and 170, and pages 18–19, n. 49; Franssen 2011, 472–473, cat. no. A 54.

<sup>22</sup> See Kokkorou-Alewrass 1993; Barlou 2014b.

<sup>23</sup> On the terrace of the lions, see Gallet de Santerre 1959, 23–36. On the lions, see Gabelmann 1965, 74–81; Kokkorou-Alewrass 1993; Kokkorou-Alewrass 1995, 121–122 (with listed measurements of the complete lions); Barlou 2014b (with extensive bibliography).

<sup>24</sup> On the sacred precinct and the sphinxes, see Tuchelt et al. 1989, 191–201, 209 and 212–213, figs. 60–84; Tuchelt 1992, 40–50; Tuchelt et al. 1996, with catalogue of the sphinxes, 146–148, Plates 79–89; Bumke 2004, 77–79.



Fig. 7.4: Chios, Museum 225: Chian *korê*, c. 580 BC.

ers. A comparison of the sphinxes K 66 and K 70<sup>25</sup> may exemplify the high variability of details that can be found on these typologically similar sculptures. On sphinx K 70, one flight feather has nearly twice the width of one contour feather (Fig. 7.6); on sphinx K 66, the width of these two feather types is almost the same (Fig. 7.7). On sphinx K 66, the short contour feathers show a complex double bend, whereas on sphinx K 70 these same feathers have a much simpler curvature. These differences are especially remarkable, as we have to assume that these statues were all carved at the same time by the same single workshop. While the facade of this precinct evidently tried to impress passers-by along the Sacred Way through its multiplication of similar marble sculptures, the focus within the row of sphinxes clearly resides in sculptural *difference*. Repetition and variation stand in a symbiotic relationship, one that aims at an ever-more magnificent effect. As Richard Neer has argued in his *Emergence of the Classical Style*, a similar principle of repetition and variation holds true for Archaic statues in general, with their ever-repeated types of *kouros* and *korê* forms, albeit with

<sup>25</sup> Balat, Milet Museum Di S 155 (= K 66 in Tuchelt et al. 1996, 146–147) and Di S 165 (= K 70 in Tuchelt et al. 1996, 148), both dated on stylistic grounds to c. 530–520 BC.



**Fig. 7.5:** Chios, Museum 226: Chian *korê*, c. 580 BC.

endless variations in details.<sup>26</sup> In short, repetition – as recurrently found in Archaic art – turns out to be an important agent of difference. Can we go so far as to say that this focus on difference, created by the backdrop of repetition, aimed at conveying a sense of contingency? This would be too speculative a way of expressing the point. What can be said with full confidence about our ‘Sacred Way’ sphinxes, however, is that the sculptor was not looking for one canonical way of depicting the different overlapping feathers of the sphinx, but instead tried out different ways of depicting this aspect of anatomy in each of his six examples. Thus, we stand at least as far away from an idealised fixed pattern defined by criteria of purely formal beauty as we stand away from the manifold contingencies of ‘reality’.

<sup>26</sup> Neer 2010, 39–40, with reference to an unpublished dissertation by R. Mack (from 1996).



Fig. 7.6: Balat, Museum Di S 165: sphinx K 70, c. 530–520 BC.

## Pattern, deviation and the generation of figurative meaning: A dynamic system

To sum up my argument so far, we might say that symmetry, repetition and geometric precision definitely *are* formal features to be found in Archaic art. But they are not formal features for their own sake, and they are often combined in groups where single examples expressly deviate from one another. At this point, let me try to explore these deviations more closely, namely where they occur on a single statue. When comparing the depiction of drapery folds on the *korai* from Chios (Figs. 7.4 and 7.5) and on the slightly younger *korai* of Cheramyres (Figs. 7.1a–b), one important difference emerges concerning what I would like to call the ‘economics of order’. Because of the careful avoidance of regularity on the Chian *korai*, it is impossible to differentiate between pattern and deviation. Inversely, the neat regularity of the folds on the Cheramyres





Fig. 7.7: Balat, Museum Di S 155: sphinx K 66, c. 530–520 BC.

*korai* allows this differentiation to be made even where the deviation is minimal. This is the case with the hem of the veil that covers the back of the figure and which is tucked into the belt on the front. A close look at this detail reveals that this hem is not exactly parallel to the vertical folds of the chiton. As I have suggested in another context,<sup>27</sup> this deviation from precise verticality refers to the tension exerted on the garment by its being pulled forward and upward into the belt. It is the perfect order of the vertical folds that allows us *both* to identify this minimal deviation as such, *and* to invest it with specific meaning.

The same principle of a clear order that allows us to distinguish sorts of deviation and to invest them with meaning also holds true for the *korai* of the Geneleos-group,<sup>28</sup> where we see for the first time the typical gesture of grasping the chiton on one side. By the progressive deviation of the vertical folds, the viewer experiences this local action of the figure's left hand as something that affects the whole lower part of the chiton, resulting in what might be called an animation of the larger marble surface. By

<sup>27</sup> See Dietrich 2011, 16–20.

<sup>28</sup> See above, n. 21.

subjecting the folds to a clear order, one from which specific deviation was thereafter possible, the *korai* that followed the first Chian attempt at depicting folds stood substantially to gain in figurative significance, and indeed in animation and liveliness. This dialectic of order and deviation opened up a new and powerful means of generating figurative meaning – and the system grew more and more complex with time. Just a few examples must suffice to illustrate this. On a Milesian *korê* in Berlin from the second quarter of the sixth century (but most probably later than the Cheramyes *korai*), we see – perhaps for the first time – an attempt at rendering what happens to the garment when it falls *obliquely* (cf. Fig. 7.8).<sup>29</sup> This oblique fall of the rectangular garment results in a zigzagging hem, a pattern that would eventually become typical of Archaic style. But here the feature should still be considered a deviation from the straight garment's hem. If the viewer is looking to explain this feature, he will do so by linking the zigzagging hem with the oblique fall of the rectangular garment. Later *korai* start from this deviation as a pattern in its own right, and add further new deviations to it – as can be seen, for example, on *korê* Acropolis 685, dated to c. 500–490 BC (Fig. 7.9).<sup>30</sup> The single folds now grow in size according to the descending depth of the garment; they follow the mechanics of an oblique fall of the rectangular mantle, rendering the garment as it 'should' appear. Moreover, the superimposed layers of folded garment are no longer flat: instead, they themselves start undulating from left to right in the to-and-fro of the zigzagging pattern of the hem. All such deviations from a simple geometric pattern can be linked with concrete sorts of figurative meaning. Indeed, why should the folded garment remain flat when compressed by the oblique fall of the mantle? At the same time, these deviations themselves constitute new patterns on the level of microscale. The growth in the size of the folds is strictly progressive, without any abrupt 'jumps'; likewise, the undulation of the garment within a single fold is repeated between two analogue folds. The simple geometric pattern of the flat zigzag seen on the Milesian *korê* has evolved into a more complex sort of ornament, containing further sorts of figurative meaning and hence carrying greater mimetic significance. At least in principle, though, the late Archaic Attic *korê* works with the same dialectics of order and deviation as a means of generating figurative content.

In her much discussed 2007 book, *Reading Greek Vases*, Ann Steiner made a related case for repetition as a means of creating meaning in Archaic Attic vase-paint-

<sup>29</sup> Berlin, Antikensammlung 1791; Karakasi 2003, 35–41, Plates. 40–41; Brüggemann and Meyer 2007, 83, cat. no. 202; Schwarzmaier, Scholl and Maischberger 2012, 42–43, no. 13 (with further bibliography).

<sup>30</sup> Athens, Acropolis Museum 685; for a thorough description, see Langlotz in Schrader 1939, 97–98, no. 47; Richter 1968, 100–101, no. 181; Ridgway 1993, 132, 145; Karakasi 2003, Plates 189–191, 274–275; Brinkmann 2003a, cat. no. 106 (for polychromy); for further bibliographical references, see Brüggemann and Meyer 2007, 60, cat. no. 48, and Franssen 2011, 491, B 51.

ing.<sup>31</sup> Although I do not agree with all of her readings, there are definitely points of contact with what I am suggesting about Archaic sculpture. But while Steiner's study of the uses of repetition in Archaic vase-painting aims primarily at semiotic readings, the function of formal repetition analysed in my sculptural case studies has more to do with figuration. After all, there is not much semantic value residing in folds, strands of hair or feathers. But these details of carving – concerning as they do the softer, lighter and more flexible parts of the body – are all the more crucial for figuration itself. Herder would have excluded these least stone-like parts of the body from the proper realm of sculpture,<sup>32</sup> and for Kant they probably should be put on the side of *parerga*.<sup>33</sup> But there can be no doubt that these sculptural details received the special attention of ancient sculptors, as a particular touchstone in the successful transformation of a marble block into the lifelike figure of a *korē* or sphinx.

## The Archaic economics of order, its inherent instability, and the 'new deal' of early Classical sculpture

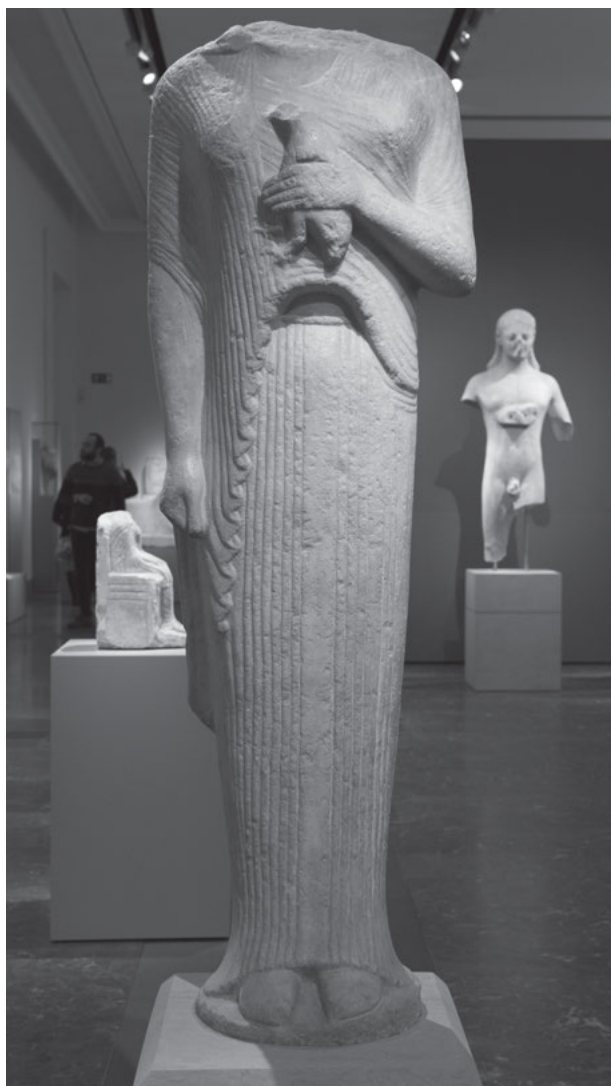
It is time now to address a particularly crucial point in the dialectics of order and deviation that I have been describing: namely, the inherent instability of the system. Although there are specific sorts of deviation everywhere to be seen, I want to suggest that there is no real disorder. There are good reasons why this should be the case. After all, any departure from this almost fractal structure of repeated deviation (that together constitutes ever-new patterns on a smaller scale) would endanger the very functioning of this particular mimetic strategy in Archaic sculpture. It is the existence of order at every level of detail that renders any departure from this order significant.

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<sup>31</sup> Steiner 2007.

<sup>32</sup> See Herder 1778, second section. For a modern edition, see Herder 1994, 243–326 (English translation: Herder 2002, with helpful introduction and bibliography). On the reception of Herder's influential work on sculpture, see Norton 1991, 204–205; specifically on Herder's influence on German classical archaeology, see Schweitzer 1948. See also Dietrich 2017, 275 and Dietrich forthcoming.

<sup>33</sup> Kant 2006, 78–79, translated in Kant 1987, 72: cf. Platt and Squire 2017, esp. 38–59 (on Derridean deconstructions), and the discussions in this volume by Squire (16–22), Neer (206–209), Platt (241–242) and Barham (280–281). It may be worth mentioning that Kant lists drapery on statues as one example of 'parergonal' *Zierraten* ('ornaments'). For a short introduction to the issues from an art historical and classical archaeological perspective, see Squire 2009, 55–57; on Kantian concepts of *parerga* and their relation to the rendering of drapery in Archaic sculpture specifically, see Neer 2010, 111–112 (developed in Neer's chapter in this volume); in relation to ornament and figure in early Attic vase-painting, cf. Haug 2015, 11, 23, 204 – along with Squire's introduction to this volume.



**Fig. 7.8:** Berlin, Antikensammlung 1791: Miletian *korê*, c. 575–550 BC.

The economics of order have thus to be kept within narrow boundaries. By introducing more and more deviations from the pattern, the sculptor also introduces more and more aspects of a mimetically produced reality. But such introductions turn out to be a walk on a tightrope. The most direct threat to this careful balance of order and deviation comes when all the different forces and tractions start to interact with one another: when the different impressions – produced by the stance of the body and its movements, by the clothes draped and knotted around the body, and by the weight of the garment pulled down by gravity – begin each to affect every other.



Fig. 7.9: Athens, Acropolis Museum 685: Attic *korê*, c. 500–490 BC.

As a matter of fact, the interaction between different forces, movements and effects of gravity is exactly what does *not* happen in Archaic sculpture.<sup>34</sup> The strict avoidance of such interaction sometimes results in rather strange effects. On Samian

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<sup>34</sup> See Dietrich 2011, 41–43: while in Archaic sculpture the different forces and tractions acting on the garment draped around the body are depicted side by side, these begin to interact with one another in Classical sculpture.

and Milesian *korai* of the second quarter of the sixth century, for example, we often find the following distinctive feature: due to the specific way in which this garment is draped around the body, two different forces exert themselves on the mantle, centred around the vertical pull of gravity and a diagonal traction from the stretch of fabric. As a result, the folds on a Milesian *korê* in Berlin are pulled in two distinct directions (Fig. 7.8). Around the right shoulder, at least, we might expect the two divergent forces to interact with one another, and yet the two rows of folds meet without the slightest interaction between them. The vertical folds are visibly rendered in the 'right' way, following a gravitational pull, but the diagonal folds nonetheless appear to continue their course behind them; it is as though we were dealing with two distinct pieces of clothing that overlap.<sup>35</sup> Many such examples of denied interaction can be found in Archaic sculpture. But a strict avoidance of interaction between different forces and tractions is not always possible. One area on a *korê* proves particularly critical here, namely the point where the chiton-garment bulges out of the mantle underneath the left arm. Here, the interaction of different forces and tractions can hardly be avoided, and it leads to a number of particularly complicated solutions.<sup>36</sup> On *korê* Acropolis 669, for example, the sculptor proceeds dangerously close to chaos.<sup>37</sup>

While Archaic sculpture *avoids* any interaction between the portrayed forces and tractions of gravity, of the body or of the draping and knotting of clothes, Classical sculpture is precisely interested in how these elements impact upon one another within the field of representation. Obviously, the best example for this lies in the motif of ponderation itself (in turn giving rise to bodily *contrapposto*), which amounts to the defining feature of Classical versus Archaic sculpture: the unequal distribution of weight between the two legs is acted out in the asymmetrical rendering of the hips, the arching of the torso into an S-curve, the portrayal of one shoulder higher than the other, and so forth, so that all parts of the body interact with one another. Something similar could be said of early Classical renderings of drapery: the large fold leading from the left breast to the right knee on the so-called Aspasia statue-type of the Early

<sup>35</sup> Three other examples of this include: (1) the *korê* dedicated by Cheramyes in Berlin (Antikensammlung 1750; c. 560 BC; Freyer-Schauenburg 1974, 27–31, cat. no. 7; Karakasi 2003, Plates 8–9; Brüggemann and Meyer 2007, 78, cat. no. 166; Franssen 2011, 461–462, cat. no. A 7); (2) a fragment of a *korê* in Samos (Vathy Museum III P 24; c. 560 BC; Freyer-Schauenburg 1974, 31–32, cat. no. 8; Karakasi 2003, Plate 10.8; Franssen 2011, 462, cat. no. A 9, with extensive bibliography); (3) another fragment of a *korê* found in Samos in 1977 (Heraion, depot P 118; c. 550 BC; Kron 1986, 49–50, figs. 23–25, noting parallels in the 'minor arts' for the peculiar fold depiction in n. 10; Karakasi 2003, Plate 16; Brüggemann and Meyer 2007, cat. no. 193; Franssen 2011, 463, cat. no. A 16). For a more thorough analysis of this phenomenon, see Dietrich 2011, 38–39.

<sup>36</sup> See Dietrich 2011, 34–37.

<sup>37</sup> Athens, Acropolis Museum 669: Langlotz in Schrader 1939, 68–71, no. 28 (detailed description); Sinn 1983, 25–34 (with discussion of the statue's 'realism'); Karakasi 2003, Plates 140–141, 188; Brüggemann 2003a, cat. no. 90 (on polychromy); for more bibliographical references, see Brüggemann and Meyer 2007, 58, cat. no. 32, and Franssen 2011, 480, cat. no. B 13.

Classical period, for instance, is generated not by one specific element, but by a conflation of several aspects in the rendering of the dynamic body and its impact on the mantle draped over it. These elements are not now shown side by side, as they are in Archaic sculpture, but instead interact each with the other.<sup>38</sup>

Such interaction between all these forces adds a particularly powerful new element into the workings of sculptural *mimêsis*: the resulting suggestion is that all of the details which the sculptor intentionally sculpted in the figure might in fact have happened of their own accord within the real situation that he has rendered. The sculptor thus simulates a causal chain within the realm of representation, one that depends neither on the sculptor, nor on the viewer's interpretation, but instead on elements of the mimetically created reality itself.<sup>39</sup> The viewer might try to trace the causal chain of forces that have led to what he is seeing, but to do so leads to rather insignificant results. After all, when a viewer interprets the sculpture, it is of little significance whether a sculpted figure places his weight on his right or left leg, even though this detail would change everything in the specific posture of every part of the body. What is important is not whether the causal chain leads to significant or insignificant grounds of explanation; rather, what is important is the fact that tracing that causal chain does not make the viewer leave the realm of representation at any point. The reasons why the sculpted figure appears in any particular manner lie in the mimetically created realm of reality itself. To express the point differently, one might say that the viewer experiences the details of the sculpted figure as contingencies of the sculpture's own virtual reality; inversely, it is exactly the *avoidance of interaction*

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<sup>38</sup> See Dietrich 2011, 41–43.

<sup>39</sup> My argument here bears points of contact with the conclusions reached by Richard Neer in his thought-provoking analysis of the evolution of naturalism in early red-figure vase-painting: Neer 2002, especially 44–54 (on 'The lion's eye'), 85–86 and 119–122 – further developed in this volume. However, Neer is here discussing different material and operating with a specific set of theoretical concepts (especially R. Wollheim's distinction of 'seeing as' and 'seeing in': Wollheim 1980, 205–226; Wollheim 1987, 46–77; Wollheim 1998; relating to Graeco-Roman art, see also Steiner 2001, 19–22; Squire 2013, esp. 103–107; Grethlein 2015 and Grethlein 2016). Indeed, the new exploration of 'seeing as' by the Pioneers – i. e. the attempt of making the viewer forget the material picture and letting him think it to be the thing depicted – finds a parallel with what has been said on the simulation of a contingency within the depiction. Moreover, my argument bears points of contact with the attractive idea put forward by Jaś Elsner, according to which the crucial difference between Archaic and early Classical statues would be that the latter were assigned subjectivity for the first time (see Elsner 2006 – the proposed model seems very convincing in itself, but it might deserve a more detailed argumentation). While the frontal Archaic *kouroi* would have only returned the viewer's gaze, acting as a mirror and taking on any identity projected on them, the Classical statues with their *contrapposto* stances and their turned heads would have confronted the viewer as (mimetically created) independent and self-determined individuals. The (seeming) self-determination of the Classical statues, paired with their newly gained subjectivity, goes hand in hand with the idea put forward here: namely, that in early fifth-century sculpture, individual folds point to a causality intrinsic to the mimetically created reality.

between different elements of the mimetically produced reality that makes Archaic sculpture so ineffective in producing a similar aesthetic experience of contingency.

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How did Greek sculptors move from the Archaic system of carefully balanced order and deviation to the new Classical system?<sup>40</sup> Let me try to provide some first attempts at an answer. Among the numerous *korai* from the Athenian Acropolis which provide the best ensemble for understanding Archaic sculpture, we have the so-called Angelitos-Athena (Fig. 7.10):<sup>41</sup> the statue obviously functions quite differently from others, although we have to assume that its dedicant did not think it to be something completely different from other votive statues dedicated in the same sanctuary. Obviously, it is only a pseudo-solution simply to exclude this votive gift from the ensemble by placing it among Classical sculptures. In addition to the ponderation of the Angelitos-Athena, consider also how the depiction of folds is markedly different from those portrayed on numerous other *korai*. Although there is still similarity between different single folds of the same type, those folds are not presented in the same sort of consistent way. The folds produced by the tightening effects of the belt on the peplos all have a closely similar form, but they each have a slightly different length, and they are not exactly equidistant from one another. Yet in contrast to the kind of significant deviations from given patterns found on *korai*, we would not here be able to devise a specific reason as to why one fold should be a centimetre longer than any other, or indeed why that same single fold occurred at this particular spot and not a centimetre further to the left or right. Indeed, there is no need to think about the folds in this sort of way either, for the function of these little departures from precise repetition has changed. The folds no longer point to specific phenomena or 'events' in the drapery, but instead serve only to add a concrete and wholly contingent detail to the general depiction of the belt fixing the peplos, without enriching this with specific iconographic information. By his departing from precise regularity, the sculptor did not 'tell' us anything; the only thing the viewer is supposed to see here is that 'the belt did this'. The change

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<sup>40</sup> The transition from Archaic to Classical art has proved very popular as a subject of recent scholarship: scholars have tended to favour models of progressive and complex change alongside long-term continuities over traditional models of revolutionary or sudden change. See among others e.g. Neer 2002 and 2010; Elsner 2006 Squire 2011, 32–68; or on a smaller scale, Maderna 2007. The conflict between the traditional model of sudden change in direct reaction to historical events and this new trend towards emphasising continuities in the *longue durée* is well exemplified by A. Stewart's critical review of Squire 2011: Stewart 2012 (with Squire's response).

<sup>41</sup> Athens, Acropolis Museum 140; c. 480 BC; Langlotz in Schrader 1939, 48–49, no. 5 (detailed description); Tölle-Kastenbein 1980, 54–56, no. 9e; Brinkmann 2003a, cat. no. 18 (on polychromy); Bol in Bol 2004, 18–19; on the column base and inscription, see Donos 2008, 537–538, K 140; for further bibliographical references, see Franssen 2011, 508, cat. no. B 134.





**Fig. 7.10:** Athens, Acropolis Museum 140: statue of Athena, c. 480 BC.

in strategy from mimetic information to mimetic deceit has visibly already happened. Indeed, there is hardly any formal pattern left in this statue, and thus no specific deviation either. One might be tempted to add that there is little 'ornamentality' left either, despite being aware of the anachronism of such a statement.

However, some very late Acropolis-*korai*, usually dated to around 500 BC, show elements of non-significant irregularity *without* changing the system altogether. On the magnificent *korê* Acropolis 594, for example, the single vertical folds of the mantle *are not* arranged in perfect regularity, but some almost overlap while others stand slightly more apart from one another.<sup>42</sup> Such a very slight disorder of the vertical mantle folds holds true for *korê* Acropolis 674 as well.<sup>43</sup> Earlier *korai*, commonly dated to around 530 BC, do still keep precise order in this respect. But do such little differences matter? In so far as any departure from precise equidistance between the vertical folds requires extra-planning from the sculptor, we do have to assume that this slight disordering was intentional. What makes the crucial difference between such deviation from order and those cases discussed earlier is that here there is no specific reason in the draping or the movement of the figure to which the deviation could have pointed. It is no *significant deviation*, but simply *disorder*. Among the numerous seated female figures from Archaic Miletus, a late example in the museum at Balat features a particularly blatant case of intentional disordering of fold patterns without any specific figurative content to which it might point. While typologically closely related to other seated figures wearing a chiton and mantle, this example reveals a strongly asymmetrical hem crossing the torso of the statue instead of the usual sort of zigzagging hem (Fig. 7.11).<sup>44</sup> Again, this is not a significant deviation, but simply disorder. The careful introduction of intentional disorder at the end of the late Archaic

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<sup>42</sup> Athens, Acropolis Museum 594; Langlotz in Schrader 1939, 102–104, no. 54 (detailed description); Richter 1968, 80–81, no. 124; Maderna-Lauter 2002, 191, 244–245; Karakasi 2003, Plates 181–183, 273 (for good photos); Brinkmann 2003a, cat. no. 47 (on polychromy); for further bibliographical references, see Brüggemann and Meyer 2007, 55, cat. no. 12, and Franssen 2011, 488, cat. no. B 40.

<sup>43</sup> Athens, Acropolis Museum 674; Langlotz in Schrader 1939, 93–95, no. 44 (detailed description); Richter 1968, 81–82, no. 127; Karakasi 2003, Plates 178–179, 269–271 (for good photos); Brinkmann 2003a, cat. no. 95 (for polychromy); Stieber 2004, 30–47; for further bibliographical references, see Brüggemann and Meyer 2007, 58, cat. no. 37, and Franssen 2011, 489, cat. no. B 44.

<sup>44</sup> Balat, Museum (discovered 1967, without inv. no.): see Graeve 1975 (with Plates. 15.1–2). Instead of a date before the destruction of Miletus in 494 BC, Graeve prefers a date soon after its reconstruction in 474 BC – but the issue must certainly remain open to debate. There are examples where several figures in the type of the seated figure popular in Archaic Miletus and Didyma were set up in a row, as for example on the rounded base in the same sacred precinct where the sphinxes discussed above were set up (see Tuchelt et al. 1996, 139–146, for a catalogue of the sculptures and fragments; Bumke 2004, 95–100). One may therefore imagine that the seated figure, with its asymmetrical mantle hem, also stood in the vicinity of typologically similar statues – which would make the intentional disorder all the more conspicuous. But there is, of course, no concrete evidence for such a setting.



**Fig. 7.11:** Balat, Museum (without inv. no.): Milesian seated female figure, soon after 474 BC (or little before 494 BC?).

period can be observed very closely in the much denser material of Attic vase-painting.

But why blur the beautiful order of Archaic sculpture, which seemed so well adapted to the Greek concept of *kosmos*? The most likely explanation for such intentional disorder seems to be a search for more lively depiction by the sculptor – after all, there had never been, as I claim, any particular striving for regularity and symmetry in Archaic sculpture. But at this very point, at the end of the Archaic period, the appearance of *non-significant disorder* constitutes a major threat to the consistency of the system as a whole. Indeed, as soon as disorder does not require any specific reason any more, the patterns themselves stop being the neutral backdrop of significant deviations within a dialectics of order and deviation. The regularity, repetition, symmetry and geometric precision of Archaic sculpture transform into a positive statement, one might say. Sooner or later, this had to make the Archaic economics of order a problem, and would pave the way for the retrospective verdict on Archaic style as stiff and unlively. Thus, the careful introduction of elements of intentional disorder by the end of the late Archaic period, as a continuation of the ever-existing striving for more lively depiction and more complete *mimêsis*, urged the sculptor eventually to change the system altogether, and leave behind the Archaic mimetic strategy of order and specific deviation.

I shall now reach a conclusion. On the one hand, I hope to have suggested that Archaic sculpture is as mimetic as Classical sculpture. However, by its specific mimetic strategies, relying on a dialectics of order and deviation generating figurative meaning, it had to keep a careful balance in order not to endanger the significance of any deviation and the intelligibility of the Archaic sculpture's meaningful *kosmos* altogether. In particular, such an economics of order did not allow the single elements of the mimetically created reality to interact with one another. This system of order and deviation as a mimetic technique was developed only gradually. Some early Archaic statues still showed features which were not included in any intelligible order, and thus approximating what might be called contingency. In any case, this demonstrates that there was no genuine striving for uniformity, geometric precision and symmetry inherent to Archaic sculpture. This explains also some later phenomena of intentionally avoiding strict symmetry. In late Archaic times, this system of meaningful *kosmos* grew more and more sophisticated and produced an astonishing mimetic density. Nevertheless, the system of meaningful *kosmos*, functioning through a dialectics of order and deviation, made Archaic sculpture unable to produce the aesthetic experience of contingency.

But this ever-growing complexity started undermining the consistency of the system. Within a search for greater liveliness, some elements started breaking the frame. Eventually the careful balance of order and deviation was abandoned altogether, as the latest statues from the *Perserschutt* clearly demonstrate: the Critian Boy and the Angelitos-Athena. Here, the taboo against letting the forces and tractions within the mimetically created reality interact with one another was abandoned. This allowed the statues for the first time to produce a powerful aesthetic experience of contingency: the single carved details no longer pointed to the specific representational intentions of the sculptor, and the statues therefore stopped recalling in each single detail the image's artificiality. Instead, the single carved details presented themselves as the effect of some self-contained causality inherent in the mimetically created reality. The *raison d'être* of the single carved detail thus does not necessarily reside in its intrinsic significance any more, but it may also just act as a witness of the actual reality of the (artificially created) image.

This very much recalls what Roland Barthes has labelled the *effet de réel*<sup>45</sup> – that is, how Barthes explains the existence of superfluous details in literary descriptions (details that bear no or only minimal semantic value) by assigning them the function of emphasising the description's realism. Would we thus have an ancient Greek antecedent to this concept introduced by Barthes as a specificity of the nineteenth-century realistic novel and contrasted by him with ancient rhetoric? It is important to note the difference between the *effet de réel* and what has been described here. In Roland Barthes' conceptualisation of the *effet de réel*, the crucial point is that the insignifi-

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<sup>45</sup> Barthes 1968.

cant detail escapes the structuralist foundation of semiotics by bypassing the *signifiant* and the *signifié* and turning directly and exclusively to its referent, relying thus on a nineteenth-century referential model of truth instead of the discursive model of truth found in ancient rhetoric. However, for analysing the (presumed) ancient Greek antecedent of the *effet de réel*, the referents that carved details may have had in reality were of no importance, since the carved details find their explanation within the (artificially created) reality of the image and its new economics of order.<sup>46</sup> The contingent detail in Classical sculpture would thus nevertheless be only a *faux semblant* of the *effet de réel* in the nineteenth-century realistic novel.

Finally, one other aspect especially relevant to our present context leaves many questions unanswered. While the Archaic art of *mimêsis*, with its both beautiful and meaningful order, seems to be a perfect illustration of the ancient concept of *kosmos*, not allowing any attempt at contrasting form and content, the dramatic change in the economics of order in the early fifth century seems to match this ancient concept of *kosmos* much less. However, there is not the slightest indication that the ancients themselves would have thought Archaic art to be more ‘cosmic’ than subsequent Classical art. Here again, the danger of over-simplification is conspicuous. How sure can we be that the beautiful and meaningful order found in Archaic sculpture really has to do with the kind of order implied in the ancient concept of *kosmos*? As always, to say what an ancient concept is *not* proves much easier than to say what an ancient concept positively is. What may nevertheless be said is that the abandonment of the Archaic system of meaningful order and deviation was not driven by any attempt to reduce the ornamental (‘parergonal’) qualities of statues, but by a change in mimetic strategy. From our anachronistic perspective, we tend to identify the new Classical way as a radical turn towards naturalism, leaving behind Archaic ornamentality. But this antagonism proved fundamentally misleading.

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<sup>46</sup> On ‘naturalism’ in Classical Greek art not necessarily relying on its referent in reality, and thus not equating to ‘truth to nature’, see Squire 2011, 55–68 and Platt 2014, 187–198 (with earlier literature).

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Richard Neer

## Ornament, incipience and narrative: Geometric to Classical\*

This chapter advances two claims, one theoretical and the other historical. The theoretical claim is that the distinction between figure and ornament is at once essential and contingent. Essential, in that the two terms are dialectically implicated; contingent, in that the boundary between them can shift, so that what counts as ornament under some conditions may count as a figure under others, and vice versa. The historical claim, meanwhile, concerns the way in which the ancient Greeks articulated this distinction. A *de facto* distinction between figure and ornament has its roots in the Geometric period; with time, Greek craftsmen came to exploit it as a source of visual interest in its own right; by the Archaic period, they were recruiting the figure-ornament distinction to the task of telling stories and articulating communities of viewing. Eventually, the establishment and manipulation of figure and ornament could be no less important than the narratives themselves. The historical argument depends on the theoretical one, so I will start with the latter.

### Defining terms

I begin by defining my terms: first ‘figure’, then ‘ornament’. The term ‘figure’, in what follows, is a component of pictorial or sculptural representation. Specifically, it concerns representational content or subject matter. As Richard Wollheim argued, in a widely admired series of papers, pictorial representation has a distinct phenomenology: ‘Looking at a suitably marked surface,’ Wollheim maintained, ‘we are visually aware at once of the marked surface and of something in front of or behind something else.’<sup>1</sup> This definition has two parts. First, Wollheim evoked a dichotomy, familiar from *Gestalt* psychology, of figure and ground: pictorial representation involves the visual awareness of a spatial relation (‘something in front of or behind something else’). But figure-ground relations pervade daily life, so this component alone will not

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\* I would like to thank Nikolaus Dietrich and Michael Squire – along with the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin and Luca Giuliani – for hosting the June 2015 conference from which this chapter derives, and for overseeing publication of the volume so ably. Throughout this chapter, I use the abbreviation ‘BAPD’ to refer to the Beazley Archive Pottery Database (<http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/xdp/ASP/testSearch.asp>); all other abbreviations follow those of the fourth edition of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*.

1 Wollheim 1998: 221. Further citations will appear in the text. For a discussion of Wollheim’s thinking, see also Grethlein’s chapter in this volume.

suffice to capture the specific phenomenon of depiction. Secondly, therefore, Wollheim insisted that the awareness to which he referred did not exclude, but was coincident with, an awareness of the material support of the picture: its ‘marked surface’, or facture. The resulting experience is ‘twofold’, a simultaneous awareness of two aspects of the same perception: representational content and material support. Both components are necessary to pictorial depiction; in tandem, they are sufficient.

Wollheim’s account has not met universal acceptance, but it has become a touchstone of serious reflections on depiction in the anglophone academy.<sup>2</sup> Minimally, Wollheim suggests that a figure in depiction is anything that is seen as being in front of or behind something else – seen, that is, in the requisite ‘twofold’ way. Figurality, therefore, is relational, not absolute. It is relational in terms of *space*: a figure is seen to be ‘in front of or behind something else’. It is also relational in terms of *materials*: a figure is seen in a ‘twofold’ way. Importantly, twofoldness can misfire or fail: one can see figures while failing to see the material support at the same time (as when taken in by a *trompe-l’œil*), and one can see the material support while failing to see or notice the figure (as when one mistakes a child’s drawing for a mess of squiggles). In such cases, one does not see the picture *as a picture* at all; one sees it as something else. To see a *trompe-l’œil* as the very thing it represents is precisely not to see it *as a picture*; neither is seeing a drawing as a mass of squiggles.

These considerations suggest that the distinction between *Bildraum* and *Bildfeld*, which Nikolaus Dietrich has used to such brilliant effect in his study of Athenian vase-painting, is heuristic but not absolute: pictorial depiction consists precisely in the fusion of the two.<sup>3</sup> Conversely, if Wollheim’s definition suggests that one cannot have a figure absolutely without space – *ohne Raum* – it is not prescriptive about what ‘space’ will look like in any given picture or group of pictures. The definition merely lays down that a certain visual experience is analytic to figurality, without specifying conditions for that experience to occur. This open-endedness is, surely, a virtue: it allows for historical and comparative accounts of depiction, while accounting for the way that people can and do see pictures in all sorts of natural phenomena, such as stains on walls.

Having defined depicted figures in terms of a spatial relation plus twofoldness, it may seem natural to define ornament in the opposite way: as ‘flat’ or ‘airless’ motifs without twofoldness. In ornament, one might be inclined to say, there is no visual experience of ‘something in front of or behind something else’; rather, there is just

<sup>2</sup> For recent responses to Wollheim, see Kemp and Mras 2016, with further bibliography.

<sup>3</sup> Dietrich 2010 (and compare also, in the context of the pictorial space surrounding the handles of Attic painted vases, Kéi’s chapter in this volume). I might be tempted to say that the concept of *Bildraum* is redundant, insofar as *Bild* entails *Raum*, and that all that matters is the elastic relation between the component elements of a *Bildfeld*: there is no *Bild* without *Raum* – however inconsistent and provisional each may be. But I am not sure whether insisting on this point would be useful or would, on the contrary, merely overdramatise what is ultimately just a difference of emphasis.

a configuration of paratactic marks, as in fretwork or tiling. This simple inversion of terms is, however, plainly inadequate, since many things that it seems natural to call ornament are neither ‘flat’ nor ‘airless’. A simple frieze of chevrons may, arguably, involve no figure-ground relation, but palmettes, lotuses and the like certainly *may* do so, as will processions of sphinxes, putti with scrolls, all the way up to the synchronised Tiller Girls that Siegfried Kracauer took to epitomise ‘mass ornament’ in the modern culture industry.<sup>4</sup> A great deal of ancient Greek ornament trades very openly on pictorial space; the Alexander Mosaic, for instance, has a *trompe-l’œil* border, and it is by no means unique. Ornament, in short, is not the antithesis of figure, because figures can be ornamental, too.

Any plausible account of ornament must accommodate this diversity. Many, however, fail to do so. Exemplary in this regard is E. H. Gombrich, whose book-length study of ornament, *The Sense of Order* (1979), was intended as a counterpart to his classic study of pictorial representation, *Art and Illusion* (1960).<sup>5</sup> Gombrich started out with an analytic distinction between what he called ‘meaning’, or representational content, and ‘pure ornament’ or ‘pure design’.<sup>6</sup> Such purity was, he allowed, a mere normative ideal: in practice, a certain play between the two poles was the very ‘warp and woof of the decorative arts’.<sup>7</sup> This latter formulation licensed subtle analyses of the interaction of the two strands (the book’s title, punning on two meanings of ‘sense’, was typical in this regard). Ultimately, however, it merely reinforced the underlying distinction. Wollheim was quick to point out that the antithesis of ‘order’ and ‘meaning’ tracked the distinction between ‘art’ and ‘illusion’, material support and pictorial content, that had been crucial to Gombrich’s earlier work on pictorial representation.<sup>8</sup> Just as Gombrich believed that one could not attend simultaneously to facture and image, so he now claimed that figure and ornament were analytically antithetical and set himself the task of undoing their complex interweave in perception. The art historian Henri Zerner argued cogently that this premise was flawed: ‘the opposition between design and representation is not as deeply rooted in our mental activity as Gombrich would have us believe’, and the result was ‘confusion’.<sup>9</sup> Purism is a problem, not a solution.

More generally, a lot of ink has been spilled trying to define ornament: to distinguish it from pattern, from figuration, from decoration, from functionality.<sup>10</sup> It is not clear, however, just what is to be gained by being prescriptive. Certainly it is possible

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<sup>4</sup> Kracauer 1995, 75–89.

<sup>5</sup> Gombrich 1960 and Gombrich 1979.

<sup>6</sup> Gombrich 1979.

<sup>7</sup> Gombrich 1979, 152.

<sup>8</sup> Wollheim 1979, 323. Cf. Gombrich 1960.

<sup>9</sup> Zerner 1979.

<sup>10</sup> Ornament vs. pattern: Holz 1972, 140–160. Ornament vs. decoration: Grabar 1992. Ornament vs. abstraction: Morgan 1992. Ornament vs. function: Trilling 2003; Brett 2005. All of these topics and

to do good work without drawing a tidy frame around the concept. Historically, for instance, the great titans of the study of art-historical ornament are doubtless Gottfried Semper and Alois Riegl. It was a rare point of agreement between the two that ornament is always at least incipiently representational, although they differed categorically about the impetus behind the ‘stylisation’.<sup>11</sup> Neither, however, offered a definition of this representational aspect. Riegl, for instance, was frustratingly opaque about what he meant by ‘surface ornament’ (*Flächenornamentik*, *Flächenverzierungen*), in particular about the relation between the constituent elements of each.<sup>12</sup> His German fused the terms, but we must prise them apart if we are to ask about the specific relation between *Fläche* and *Ornament*. How surface-bound must ornament be, if it is to remain ornament and, as Riegl argued, ‘structurally symbolic’? At what point does it disengage from surface so much as to be figural? Riegl is unforthcoming. Although he associates certain features with ornament (‘stylisation’, ‘symmetry’, ‘repetition’), he seems to take the coherence of the category for granted; a mere list of characteristic associations is precisely not a definition in terms of conditions. Margaret Olin is surely right to say that ‘Riegl did not regard ... [his] use of terms as imprecise’, but that is what they are.<sup>13</sup> Yet the richness of Riegl’s studies derives, at least in part, from the fact they are ultimately unsystematic: they proceed from evolutionary taxonomy in the early *Questions of Style* to perceptual psychology in the later *Historical Grammar of the Visual Arts* without ever laying out cut and dried categories. This antireductive tendency is, in no small part, why Riegl’s local descriptions of particular objects and classes can remain compelling even as his larger evolutionary narratives are tediously racist.<sup>14</sup> He is most convincing when most impure.

Behind Semper and Riegl, Kant’s account of ornament, or what he called *parerga*, stresses its subjective aspect, hence its resistance to determinate criteria. Kant certainly understood that figure and ornament are not antithetical: his prime example of the *parergon* was sculpted drapery, which he understood to be ancillary to, and a foil for, the rendering of the human body, even though it is depictive through and through.<sup>15</sup> The key passage, however, is a brief discussion of Greek or Neoclassical ornament, ornament ‘à la grecque’, in the *Critique of Judgment*. Interestingly, Kant

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more are discussed in Necipoğlu and Payne 2016; especially germane is Hay 2016. On the historiography of such distinctions, see also Squire’s introduction to this volume.

<sup>11</sup> Riegl 1992; Semper 2004. For a useful historiography of ornament (mostly architectural), see Payne 2012.

<sup>12</sup> Evelyn Kain (Riegl 1992) translates both *Flächenornamentik* and *Flächenverzierungen* as ‘surface decoration’; I have modified the translation for the sake of consistency.

<sup>13</sup> Olin 1992, 135.

<sup>14</sup> Michaud 2012.

<sup>15</sup> Kant 2000, 111. Numerous chapters in this volume return to Kant’s thinking – e.g. those by Squire, Platt and Barham. On Kantian aesthetics, and its (non-)applicability to ancient imagery, see now the chapters in Platt and Squire (eds.) (2017), esp. Platt and Squire 2017, 38–59.

specifically excludes such ornament from the ranks of the *parerga*. His reasons for doing so are intrinsically interesting in the context of a volume on Greek and Roman ornament, but they also shed light on the basic problem of definition.

Kant begins by contrasting two kinds of beauty, which he calls free and adherent: free beauty ‘presupposes no concept of what the object ought to be’, while adherent beauty ‘does presuppose such a concept and the perfection of the object in accordance with it’.<sup>16</sup> Examples of free beauties are flowers, sea shells and parrots, which have no purpose whatsoever but are just beautiful (for us). Examples of adherent beauties are things that possess some function, such as churches or houses: the beauty of the cathedral of Chartres is ‘adherent’ upon its religious function, in that the beauty is at once logically separable from the function but also conditioned by it. For Kant, free beauty is superior to adherent, because it allows of wholly disinterested judgment. Greek ornament goes in the first, superior category, free beauty, by virtue of its abstraction: ‘Designs *à la grecque*’, says Kant, ‘foliage for borders or on wallpaper, etc., signify nothing by themselves: they do not represent anything, no object under a determinate concept, and are free beauties’.<sup>17</sup> It is because he extols ornament in this way that Kant has been read variously as a prophet of twentieth-century abstraction, and as a nutty formalist who thinks that a sample of Neoclassical wallpaper is aesthetically superior to Chartres Cathedral.<sup>18</sup>

On the other hand, free beauties can be made adherent by giving them a function and setting them in relation to other works. Take some wallpaper *à la grecque*, trim it with scissors and make a picture frame out of it, and suddenly the free beauty is adherent and ‘parergonal’. ‘Foliage for borders’, a free beauty in itself, becomes adherent when it is actually employed as a border, that is, a *parergon*. Examples are easy to dream up: a picture frame made of sea shells, a border of roses around a garden statue and so on. Kant, in other words, did not simply oppose figure to ornament. Instead, he relativised the terms in a complex, multi-dimensional way. He proposed a labile relation between two subsidiary pairs: figure-ground on the one hand, and figure-ornament on the other. Aesthetic judgment was a way to synthesise these relations and subsume them under concepts.

At its most helpful, Kant’s account encourages an unsystematic and *ad hoc* approach to ornament, even as it warns us against a simplistic assimilation of ornament to surface or pattern. We need a better way to capture the improvisatory, hence historical relations involved (the usual problem with Kant). To that end, it might be helpful to shift the discussion away from properties of objects (or features that it is all too easy to talk about as though they were properties), such as ‘space’, ‘figuration’ and ‘pattern’, and toward ways of seeing and modes of comportment, rather as Riegl pro-

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<sup>16</sup> Kant 2000, 114.

<sup>17</sup> Kant 2000, 114.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Schaper 2003.

ceeded from taxonomy to psychology. As Steven Adams puts it: ‘The task, perhaps, is not to search for a definition for “ornament” or even to suggest that it might form a substantive cultural category but to track ways in which the term’s meaning and use have changed and to ensure that this process of change is held together by a narrative that makes comparison meaningful.’<sup>19</sup> If ornament has an essence, it may be expressed in how the concept fits into a larger pattern of reference- and assignment-relations that is itself historically variable. The perennially enticing thing about this topic is, precisely, the analogy it invites between ornamental patternwork and conceptual patterns: an historical grammar of ornament is really an historical grammar of concepts, the possession and deployment of which will be exemplified in practice.<sup>20</sup> This, in a Hegelian inflection that would identify such patterns precisely as historical *Geist*, that is, as a communal like-mindedness sensibly apparent in and through art, was basically Riegl’s project. The challenge is to reconfigure it without recourse to hand-waving or to overtly metaphysical terms such as *Kunstwollen*.

One alternative might be to approach ornament in terms of attention and focus. Ornament, we might say, is everything to which you do *not* attend when you look at a picture or a sculpture; everything you overlook. As Jacques Derrida put it, the *parergon* ‘disappears, buries itself, effaces itself, melts away at the moment it deploys its greatest energy’.<sup>21</sup> Ornament is visible, even eye-catching, yet one ‘brackets’ it; it always threatens to fall out of experience, rather like what perceptual psychologists call *redundancies*.<sup>22</sup> This ‘bracketing’ may, but need not, involve suppressing the perception of figure and ground entirely to see mere patternwork. Some orna-

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<sup>19</sup> Adams 2006, 89.

<sup>20</sup> Grammar of ornament: Jones 1856. ‘Essence is expressed in grammar’ [*Das Wesen ist in der Grammatik ausgesprochen*]: Wittgenstein 2009, 123, § 371.

<sup>21</sup> Derrida 1987, 61; cf. Platt and Squire 2017, esp. 47–59.

<sup>22</sup> It may seem that the phrase ‘in a work’ surreptitiously introduces a concept of boundary, limit or frame and, in so doing, re-ontologises a distinction that I am trying to recast in procedural or ‘grammatical’ terms. It bears emphasis, therefore, that the term ‘in a work’ is itself open-ended. The case of the *Mona Lisa* will illustrate. The picture, as it hangs in the Louvre, is shielded from view by a pane of bulletproof glass. Much effort has been made to make sure that this glass is unobtrusive: viewers will, it is hoped, bracket or overlook it. Is the glass, therefore, an *ornament* to the work, on the definition offered here? It depends on what you consider the ‘work’ to be in this case. If you define the work narrowly as a picture produced by Leonardo da Vinci on panel in the fifteenth century, then the glass is not an ornamental element of the *Mona Lisa*. If, however, someone should take a larger view, and see the *Mona Lisa* as an example of contemporary installation art, encompassing the whole room that it occupies, and all the tourists who pass to and fro, then it could perfectly well be viable to describe the glass as an ornamental element (any thorny issues would be like those that apply to other installations, such as sculpture: on which, see below). Redundancy: see, for example, Driver and Baylis 1996; Jiang et al. 2010; Brown 2012. The analogy with perceptual psychology is inexact: redundancy has proved a useful term for understanding internal features of repeating patterns (like much ornament), but my suggestion is that ornament is *itself* ‘redundant’. The latter sense of redundancy may depend upon and overlap with the former, but the two are not identical.



ments are not normally candidates for the status of figure (say, a solid gold band as a frame), while others can solicit attention to the point that it is not clear whether they are ornamental at all (think of Michelangelo's *ignudi* on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, or Carracci's *trompe-l'œil* frames in the Galleria Farnese). The relations are loose and fluid, the rules local and *ad hoc*. Pay special attention to a picture frame, to the detriment of the picture itself, and the usual hierarchy can flip, so that the picture becomes *de facto* the ornament of the frame.<sup>23</sup> This potential reversibility expresses the contingent aspect of ornament: 'figural' and 'ornamentality' may be essential but they are not *properties* of an object. They are, rather, functions of the beholder's attention; ornament is more a way of seeing than a coherent class of entity in the world. On this view, nothing is necessarily ornamental, but anything might be: there is no telling, in advance, where the ornamental might 'end'.

Such capaciousness might be counted a virtue, rather like the analogous capaciousness to Wollheim's account of figuration. It certainly facilitates comparison across media.<sup>24</sup> It is, after all, no easy thing to map terms such as 'figure', 'ground' and 'ornament' from pictorial art onto sculpture: in particular, the distinction between figure and ground does not carry over in any simple or straightforward way.<sup>25</sup> In sculpture, relations of 'in front' and 'behind' can be simultaneously depictive and non-depictive, most obviously in sculptural groups that array discrete figures in space. What is the 'ground' of a freestanding statue, and how (if at all) is it like a 'ground' in painting? Where does a statue's 'diegetic world' come to an end? And so on. Compared with such questions, the distinction between relative attention and relative oversight seems straightforward in conception, however slippery it may be in application. We might say that, in sculpture as in painting, ornament is a visible, even conspicuous element that the beholder *regularly* or *normatively* sets aside to a significant degree. It may be more than that as well: this definition is not exhaustive but let us see how far it takes us.

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<sup>23</sup> For further examples of such interpretive 'flipping' – explored in the context of moving between the pictorial field and the zone underneath the handles of painted Attic vases – compare Kéi's chapter in this volume.

<sup>24</sup> For recent discussion of transmedial ornaments, see Cummins 2016; Pullins 2016; Wolf 2016. Compare also Grethlein's chapter in this volume (on the ornamental in the context of both vase-painting and Homeric poetry).

<sup>25</sup> See Vance 1995; Hopkins 2010. See also Neer 2010.

## Geometric

One way into this problem, well suited to students of antiquity, is to ask how the distinction between figure and ornament came to seem so important in the first place. If figure and ornament are dialectically implicated, then it is tempting to say that there was little or no ornament at all in Greek art between the end of the Bronze Age (Late Helladic IIIc) and the eighth century BC. To put it this way may sound perverse: the period in question is known as ‘Geometric’ exactly because of its pervasively ‘ornamental’ or ‘decorative’ pottery. Unambiguous instances of figuration are almost non-existent in Protogeometric, Early Geometric and Middle Geometric, which means that ornament must have been almost non-existent as well; it is vacuous and anachronistic to say that the Geometric style of pottery is ‘ornamental’ if the term contrasts with nothing.<sup>26</sup> The apparent absence of figuration from Geometric, the apparent dominance of the ‘ornamental’ or the ‘decorative’, suggests that a purist notion of ornament is ultimately self-defeating.

This point encourages closer scrutiny of Geometric figuration. There is, after all, some figuration before Late Geometric, as on the odd Protogeometric pot or on Eastern imports and Bronze Age heirlooms of the sort found in the heroon at Lefkandi.<sup>27</sup> More importantly, though, the terms (to belabour a point) are *always improvisatory*. One should not be dogmatic about what can or cannot be seen even in an apparently surface-bound array of lines.<sup>28</sup> If the Greeks themselves did not police this boundary, there is no need for us to do so for them.

Many Geometric artefacts are, in fact, *incipiently iconic*. What is more, as Annette Haug explores in this volume, Greek craftsmen made this incipience a source of visual interest. Pots, for example, can be vaguely anthropomorphic or zoomorphic, as in the case of Attic belly-handled amphorae that flirt with being figures of squat, long-necked women (Fig. 8.1; cf. e.g. Fig. 4.6).<sup>29</sup> These amphorae routinely marked the graves of women as σῆματα and could also be interred as containers for women’s bones. They

<sup>26</sup> This formulation is literally ‘figurocentric’, insofar as it defines ornament dialectically as that which is peripheral to figures. Some might suggest that it is Eurocentric as well, insofar as some traditions, such as the Islamic, are said to be non-figural. Yet, as Gülru Necipoğlu and Alina Payne have recently argued, there is a certain amount of essentialist (and, one might add, formalistic) myth-making in the idea of wholly non-figural tradition (Necipoğlu and Payne 2016, 3–4).

<sup>27</sup> On Geometric figuration, with special emphasis on continuity with Mycenaean, see the essays in Rystedt and Wells 2006.

<sup>28</sup> Henri Zerner makes a similar point in his incisive review of Gombrich 1979, emphasising that even seemingly decorative or ornamental patterns may be ‘physiognomic’ (Zerner 1979). More recently, Necipoğlu and Payne 2016 devote a section to the middle ground between ornament and figuration (arguably, in some instances, reifying the distinction: Necipoğlu and Payne 2016, 192–248).

<sup>29</sup> On Bronze Age anthropomorphic vessels, see Simandiraki-Grimshaw (2013). On belly-handled amphorae, see Whitley 2015, with further references. More generally on figure and ornament in the context of plastic Geometric vessels, see Haug’s chapter in this volume.



**Fig. 8.1:** Attic Middle Geometric belly-handled amphora, ninth to eighth century BC. Athens, Kerameikos Museum.

flirt with iconoccity: compass-drawn circles can be seen as breasts, handles as arms, the swelling belly a torso, etcetera. The resulting play of resemblance and representation is perhaps a visual analogue to the way that Greek writers persistently liken women to vessels, as when Hesiod associates Pandora with a *pithos*, or the Hippocratic writers liken the womb to an inverted jar.<sup>30</sup> Modern distinctions, as between pottery and sculpture, or between plastic and ordinary vases, are certainly useful, but also tend to close down such ambiguities.<sup>31</sup> There are good reasons why we classify belly-handled amphorae as pottery and distinguish between compass-drawn circles and pictures, but the legitimacy of those classifications need not come at the expense of other ways of arranging the corpus. Vessel, sculpture, figure, ornament: must we choose and, if so, must we be consistent?

Moreover, a great many Greek 'ornamental' patterns involve figure-ground relations or even recognisable iconographies (e. g., Late Geometric animal friezes). Even bichrome patterns lend themselves to so-called '*Gestalt* switches', in which figure and ground oscillate in perception (Fig. 8.2).<sup>32</sup> Most of the motifs and patterns in the Geometric repertoire may be seen indifferently as light-on-dark or dark-on-light, one aspect replacing the other in an endless to and fro. The Middle Geometric example in Fig. 8.1 contains numerous examples, such as the prominent sawtooth bands above and below the handle zone: pendant light triangles on dark, or upright dark triangles on light, take your pick. Even to speak of figure versus ornament in such situations seems inapt. Greek has plenty of more capacious terms, such as ποικιλία, 'rich complex adornment', and κόσμησις, 'well ordered adornment'.<sup>33</sup> When, for example, Pindar says that an Athenian amphora is *pampoikilos* (παμποίκιλος, *Nem.* 10.36), he is telling us that it shimmers and shifts, like the skin of a serpent or the hide of a fawn. Such terms address the tension between different ways of seeing the same thing; logically, we may distinguish the two, but phenomenologically they interfuse. It is this duplex, shifting experience of the incipient that captured the imagination of the Greeks.

Late Geometric combines pattern and figure in repetitive animal friezes; *horror vacui* – which results in sprinkling chevrons and dots everywhere – obviates the whole question of any strict logic to pictorial space.<sup>34</sup> On the name-piece of the Painter of Athens 877, for instance, it would make no sense to get too hung up about the exact spatial relations of the various fish, horses, pendant triangles, floating rhomboids

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Sissa 1987: 76–93; Reeder 1995; Zeitlin 1996, 64–68.

<sup>31</sup> See Neer forthcoming.

<sup>32</sup> The classic introductory discussion of '*Gestalt*-switches' is Köhler 1947: 181–187, 202–203.

<sup>33</sup> On *poikilia*, see Detienne and Vernant 1978: 25–31, 49–51, 288. *Poikilia* and vase-painting is explored at length in Neer 2002; cf. also the chapters in this volume by Lissarrague and Kéi (esp. 132–134, 144–145).

<sup>34</sup> See Martens 1992.



Fig. 8.2: The Gestalt circle-cross.

and so on (Fig. 8.3).<sup>35</sup> It would be quite inapt to speak of games of *mise en abyme* or paradoxes in such juxtapositions of ‘figure’ and ‘ornament’, because the operative distinctions do not pertain; it would be a bit like wondering how characters in Athenian tragedy manage to speak in iambic trimeter, even when highly distraught.<sup>36</sup> This is not to say, by any means, that the spatial relations in Greek art are *never* important (any more than it is to say that tragic metre is never important), just that any effort at internal consistency is by no means given or self-evident. Pots are *poikiloi*.

At the opposite extreme from the incipiently iconic is what might be called the *incipiently hieroglyphic*. Late Geometric figural motifs sometimes appear in formulaic combinations that cry out for symbolic reading or even decipherment. Susan Langdon, for example, has described how Argive Geometric repeatedly features a man leading two horses, each with a fish floating beneath its midsection (Fig. 8.3).<sup>37</sup> The formula is so pervasive that the group should probably be regarded as a unit. On the one hand, it is hard to dismiss the fishes as mere filler, even though they are clearly ancillary to the larger, central motif; on the other, it would surely be obtuse to insist on any sort of spatial or diegetic relation between the two animals, e. g., that the fish must be leaping into the air while the horse walks on water. The relation between fish and horse is meaningful, yet it is neither ornamental nor diegetic, but, it seems, diagrammatic or symbolic. Langdon suggests, plausibly, that the entire unit may derive from Near Eastern antecedents, even if the Argives themselves did not understand its original significance. For present purposes, the interesting point is that neither figure nor ornament is really apt to this motif. The terms themselves ‘melt away’ in the incipient, the potential, the possible transformation of *all* of the figural

<sup>35</sup> Argive Late Geometric krater by the Painter of Athens 877, from Melos: Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. 877. The word *κόσμος*, note, is translated into Latin as *ornamentum*: on the terminology, cf. the chapters in this volume by e. g. Squire (with further bibliography at 2, n. 3), Hölscher, Barham and Reinhardt.

<sup>36</sup> For a classic discussion of such ‘silly questions’, see Walton 1990, 174–183.

<sup>37</sup> Langdon 1989. See Boardman 1983; Langdon 2008.



**Fig. 8.3:** Argive Late Geometric krater by the Painter of Athens 877, from Melos, c. 730–690 BC. Athens, National Archaeological Museum: inv. 877.

elements into a system in which the principle of combination is conceptual or even linguistic.

It requires a certain acculturation to know what, if anything, is correctly to be seen in these pictures. Their play of convention and improvisation seems to presuppose a well-informed viewership, capable of dealing with, or even ignoring, apparent incongruities. There is an analogy with the content of what seem to be narrative scenes in the same period: although some Late Geometric vignettes do resemble later representations of mythological narrative, it is notoriously difficult to be certain whether they are anything more than generic.<sup>38</sup> Yet the absence of iconographic signposts is revealing in itself. It was, perhaps, Jean-Pierre Vernant who first drew attention to a pervasive disregard for broader communities of viewing in early Greek art, an innate provincialism or elitism.<sup>39</sup> Geometric art, even when bound for export, was produced in small, ‘face-to-face’ communities, and most people never travelled more than a few miles from home. It seems never to have occurred to Geometric craftsmen that their imagery might be incomprehensible to anyone who was not in the know; or, if it did occur to them, they did not care. This outlook may be typical of oral cultures, in which direct conversation is the basic model of communication.

All of which is to say that, in Geometric art at any rate, the distinction between figure and ornament is more social than pictorial. Exactly because it is not self-evident and rigid, but improvisatory and inconsistent, its negotiation requires a certain know-how or *phronêsis*. Geometric art presupposes this know-how, and is in this

<sup>38</sup> On this much-discussed topic, see the superb but very different overviews in Langdon 2008 and Giuliani 2013, 19–52.

<sup>39</sup> Vernant 2006, 333–349.

sense deeply parochial. The boundary of figure and ornament is the boundary of a community of beholders, of people who can see distinctions that are not fixed, who can pick up the cues, finesse the unwritten laws: a society of *phronimoi*.

## Blinding and bedazzlement

Greek craftsmen of the Archaic period recruited this distinction between figure and ornament for the purposes of narrative. They *thematized* the distinction and, with it, the closely related one between figure and ground. A good example is the well-known krater from Cerveteri, signed by Aristonothos, the ‘Noble Bastard’ (Figs. 8.4–8.5).<sup>40</sup> On one side the krater depicts a familiar scene: Odysseus and his men blinding Polyphemus. On the other, two ships do battle. The ship on the left is clearly Greek, its prow adorned with an apotropaic eye; the one on the right is, according to Mauro Cristofani, probably Etruscan.<sup>41</sup> As Carol Dougherty and others have emphasised, there is a parallel between the two sides: in each case, the Greeks charge in from the left, ramming or blinding the Etruscan ship or the mythological equivalent, the Cyclops.<sup>42</sup> The krater is, for this reason, a good example of how the Odysseus myth provided a means of reflection on the Greek experience in the West.<sup>43</sup>

But there is more going on here than a simple antithesis of Greek vs. Etruscan, hero vs. monster. The krater makes vision itself an important theme. The Greek ship bears an eye on its prow as it rams the eyeless Etruscan craft; turn the vase, and the Greeks are blinding the one-eyed Cyclops.<sup>44</sup> Here it is important to remember that a krater is symposium furniture, used for getting drunk. Polyphemus is not just an exemplar of the Etruscans, but of a bad host as well: he devours his guests and passes out from drink, and his punishment is the loss of his single eye. In this context, in which vision is so prominently at issue, what are we to make of the role of ornament? Floating between the two ships on side A is a large, black-and-white rosette. It is visible to us, as beholders, but it has no place in the depicted narrative; it is no part of the ‘diegetic world’ of the naval battle. To know the distinction, to see the scene properly, involves what I have been calling *phronêsis*. In the case of the Geometric

<sup>40</sup> Rome, Musei Capitolini, Palazzo dei Conservatori, inv. 172. See Schweitzer 1955; Mingazzini 1976; Martelli 1987 no. 40; Jeffery 1990, 239, 241; Wachter 2001, 29–30; Dougherty 2003; Izzet 2004; Cordano 2007; Gianni 2007; Harari 2014.

<sup>41</sup> Cristofani 1983, 28–29, 47; Martelli 1987, 264; Dougherty 2003; Izzet 2004, 201–202.

<sup>42</sup> Martelli 1987, 264; Dougherty 2003.

<sup>43</sup> The ethnically differentiated naval battle is, however, a motif that goes back to LH IIIC: Mountjoy 2005. On the *Odyssey* and colonisation see, *inter alia*, Malkin 1998; Dougherty 2003.

<sup>44</sup> Izzet 2004, 202.



**Fig. 8.4:** Krater from Cerveteri, signed by Aristonothos. Side A: Odysseus and his men blind Polyphemus, mid-seventh century BC. Rome, Capitoline Museums: inv. C 172.

krater and countless vases like it, such ornamentation is unremarkable and poses no special problem for viewers.

With Aristonothos, however, matters are more complex. The rosette takes up a position at the focal point of the entire decorative programme: the point where the ships clash and where the curving wall of the krater, when seen head on, extends closest to the user. More importantly, the rosette is composite, precisely in the matter of figure-ground relations. It is, in fact, nearly identical to the *Gestalt* ‘circle-cross’ illustrated earlier (Fig. 8.2). Like the cross, the rosette shuttles or oscillates between two competing aspects: do we see white petals lying atop black ones, or black petals atop white ones? Whichever option we choose – or, more likely, if we let go and oscillate promiscuously between options – the answer is apt to put a certain strain on the





**Fig. 8.5:** Side B of the same krater: sea battle. Mid-seventh century BC.

easy compatibility of figure and ornament. By virtue of its prominent placement and its distinctive composition, this little device puts at issue, renders conspicuous, the crucial experience of seeing ‘something in front of or behind something else’.<sup>45</sup> This sheer visual prominence, moreover, compromises the practical distinction between figure and ornament: something eyecatching and puzzling at dead centre is hardly apt for inattention or overlooking, rather it cries out for focalised attention. The figure–ground oscillation corresponds, here, to a figure-ornament oscillation.

<sup>45</sup> Brian Shefton has studied compass-drawn rosettes, a distinct but related phenomenon that likewise plays with *Gestalt*-shifts, and has demonstrated a Phoenician origin: Shefton 1989.

In this way, Aristonothos combines multiple figural regimes in a single field. The figure-ground relation, the center-periphery relation and the figure-ornament relation all coincide in mutual incompatibility – so that, at the very site where Greek and Etruscan collide, the status of our own vision becomes uncertain. Given that the ideal viewer of such a krater is a symposiast – a half-drunk man at rest in the half-light of an *andrôn* – its themes of wine and blindness are nothing if not topical. Looking at the rosette, our eyes fail us, and there is no certainty in vision. Are we drunk? Blind? Monstrous?

It is easy to make too much of such effects. To produce them is, however, part of the *technê* of an artisan; their interest and importance depends, paradoxically, on their triviality, their sheer ordinariness. It is probably best to see the resonance between the blinding of the drunken Polyphemos and the bedazzlement of the symposiast who stares too long at the rosettes as playful rather than sober. *Gestalt* shifts amount to riddles with no answer; they may best be understood by analogy with the jokes and paradoxes that symposiasts would tell as they reclined around tens of thousands of krateres from Ampurias to Panticapaeum, everyday subversions of the sort that the symposium existed in order to stage and contain.<sup>46</sup>

That said, it is interesting that the Protoattic Eleusis amphora should use the identical motif for a nearly identical purpose (Fig. 8.6; cf. Figs. 3.2–3.4).<sup>47</sup> On the shoulder, Odysseus again blinds Polyphemos; on the belly, the Gorgons chase Perseus alongside the decapitated body of Medusa, their staring faces turned outward at the viewer (cf. Figs. 3.2–3.3). Robin Osborne has shown that a thematic of vision unites the two scenes, blinding above, petrifying gazes below – and the same thematic is apparent in the seemingly non-narrative, non-depictive ornament as well.<sup>48</sup> Rosette crosses pepper the background: again, are they light on dark or dark on light? The ‘Polyphemos Painter’, as he is called, draws attention to the shift of black and white, juxtaposing two ‘positive’ versions in the background with a ‘negative’ version incised on a sailor’s thigh – a tattoo, or a stray bit of ornament? The amphora’s lattice-work handles feature a nearly identical motif: two interlocking crosses of four wedges each, the one comprised of cut-out voids, the other of solid clay with painted accents. A horizontal band demarcates each unit above and below. Here a literal interplay of solid and void, bright emptiness and black silhouette, reiterates the purely pictorial or virtual oscillation of foreground and background in the painted rosettes. The effect seems cultivated, insofar as the deployment of similar motifs to similar effect in both two and three dimensions seems too much for coincidence. Some confirmation is

<sup>46</sup> On the relation between symposium jokes and pictorial space in Athenian vase-painting, see the first and second chapters of Neer 2002.

<sup>47</sup> Eleusis, Archaeological Museum, inv. 2630. See Mylonas 1955, along with Grethlein’s chapter in this volume.

<sup>48</sup> Osborne 1988.



**Fig. 8.6:** Neck of the Middle Protoattic amphora from Eleusis: Odysseus and his men blind the Cyclops Polyphemus, mid-seventh century BC. Eleusis, Archaeological Museum: inv. 2630.

provided by a corresponding mark on the thigh of the leftmost sailor: a braid pattern, matching the braids that run at the top of the scene and on the outer faces of the handles. In each case, the sailor's thigh bears a single unit of a pattern that repeats elsewhere on the pot.

It may be significant, in this light, that the stake that Odysseus drives into Polyphemus' eye is continuous with the upper border of the picture; the Greek sailors are literally gripping the 'ceiling'. This detail suggests, at the very least, that the painter was willing to improvise: he displays a fine disregard for any consistent differentiation of diegetic and non-diegetic elements. What is consistent, on the other hand, is the juxtaposition of *Gestalt* switches with a narrative theme of vision: the deadly stare of the Gorgon and the blinding of the Cyclops, excess and deficiency. Both stories are subordinate to this overriding concern. More strongly: the two narratives are of secondary importance compared with a general economy of shifting and oscillation in flatness and depth, solidity and void. The stories are a pretext for, and gloss upon, a visual effect. Classical archaeology, rooted as it is in philology, tends

to assume that narrative and iconography are the most important things about any picture, but the Eleusis amphora is a powerful counterexample: to its pervasive thematisation of *Gestalt* shifts there corresponds a matching inversion of methodological hierarchies in our modern discipline. In this situation, where the ornament is really the main element, standard categories and procedures are all potentially reversible: even, or especially, that of figure and ornament.

Returning to Aristonothos (Figs. 8.4–8.5), an ornamental motif – a rosette – is at once central, visually conspicuous and yet distinct from the depicted action. We are not to imagine that a large flower has intervened between the two ships; neither, however, are we to pretend the flower is not there. Diegetic space is still improvisatory and inconsistent, or, if you prefer, virtuosic; *horror vacui* still obtains, but now the picture makes that fact conspicuous by the prominence it gives to a decorative motif that also establishes inconsistent and shifting relations of foreground and background. The oscillating rosette occupies the same place in the composition as the sharpened stake does in the Blinding of Polyphemos – a structural equivalency, rosette and stake being each, in their own way, destructive of vision, the one by confounding what we see, the other by destroying the organ of sight.

The signature on the vase gives away the game. It is a canting name, meaning ‘The Noble Bastard’, or ‘The Good Phony’, an oxymoron if ever there was one. Is it a joke, an indication of servile status, a reflection of hybridity at the Graeco-Etruscan frontier?<sup>49</sup> These questions are as intractable as the question of whether the floral between the ships is light on dark or dark on light. Here, in a drunken revel at the border of East and West, the noble and the illegitimate, Greek and foreign, guest and host, vision and blindness, all grow confused, on a bowl purpose-made for mixing up wine and water. The joke is a prosopographical analogue to the treatment of space and ethnicity elsewhere on the pot; beyond that, speculation seems fruitless.

In sum, one might see these oscillating rosettes as so many glosses upon the story, a metaphor for the action, or conversely one might see the story as a narrativisation or acting out of the formal articulation of space, the *Gestalt* switch itself. For present purposes, two points are especially germane. First, the ornamental motif has become a thematic element in a larger narrative assemblage. Second, the optical distinction has become a way to manipulate distinctions of community, in this case, Greek and Etruscan, human and monster, ἰθαγενής and νόθος. Both the play between figure and ground and the play between figure and ornament have become resources that the painter can exploit to enrich and complicate the presentation of narrative.

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49 Coldstream 1993; Wachter 2001, 29–30; Izzet 2004, 194–201; Cordano 2007.

## Indecorous decor

Much Archaic ornament works in this fashion, establishing *Gestalt* shifts between foreground and background with greater or lesser artifice. I have argued elsewhere that the riddles, puns and jokes of the Greek drinking party – attested in Athenaeus and the corpus of early iambic, elegaic and melic poetry – provide a ready vocabulary for coming to grips with such features.<sup>50</sup> Visual uncertainty is a great theme of Athenian ceramic imagery, emerging as it does from the bibulous, Dionysiac world of the symposium. The rays that adorn the bases of countless black-figure amphorae can provoke the same figure–ground reversals as the double florals of Aristonothos and the Polyphemus Painter, shifting between light rays on a dark ground or dark rays on a light ground. The invention of red-figure lent impetus to this tendency. Red-figure, after all, reversed a centuries-old tradition of figure–ground relations, from black-on-red to red-on-black. In so doing, it simply ‘scaled up’ the principle at work on ornamental bands to include figural scenes as well. ‘Bilingual’ amphorae often traded on this doubleness by matching identical configurations in each technique. Although the result is not literally a *Gestalt* shift – there is a salient difference between a bilingual pot and the Aristonothos rosette – these technical innovations did make relations of figure, ground and ornament visually conspicuous simply by upending tradition. One result is that the rendering of space became an issue for vase-painters in the later sixth century as it simply had not been previously. In short, a standing tradition of ready-made *Gestalt* shifts combined with technical innovation to make pictorial space conspicuous and encouraged painters to play and experiment.

Figures themselves can be ornamental, especially *Mischwesen* such as sphinxes; shown here is a cup by the Euergides Painter of the late sixth century BC, featuring a late descendent of the Geometric ‘horse-leader’ motif (Fig. 8.7).<sup>51</sup> If Orientalising rosettes are *spatially* or *formally* duplex, then these composite monsters are *iconographically* duplex.<sup>52</sup> Most obviously, they are literally composite in their anatomy. More subtly, most *Mischwesen* can be both singular and multiple: there is *the* Sphinx, the one that terrorised Thebes, and then there are generic sphinxes that can pop up anywhere; there is *the* Centaur, Cheiron, and then there are more or less generic centaurs; there is *the* Gorgon, Medusa, and then there are her sisters Stheno and Euryale, *the* Silen, Pappasilenos, and then the chorus of satyrs, and so on. Vase-painters can be coy about this distinction, as when the Eucharides Painter depicts what is either a group of Thebans confronting *the* Sphinx and puzzling over the riddle, or a group of

<sup>50</sup> This paragraph summarises Neer 2002, 9–86. Much of this work is inspired by Lissarrague 1987. See also Neer 2009.

<sup>51</sup> Cup by the Euergides Painter: London, British Museum, 1920.6–13.1 (BAPD 200698).

<sup>52</sup> On composite monsters see, most recently, Müller 1978; Kourou 1991; Lada-Richards 1998; Wamser et al. 2000; Padgett 2003; Winkler-Horacek 2006; Hughes 2010; Biella 2012; Perego 2012.



**Fig. 8.7:** Cup by the Euergides Painter: youth between horses between sphinxes between palmettes, late sixth century BC. London, British Museum: inv. 1920.6–13.1 (BAPD 200698).

Athenians clustered around a grave stele crowned with a sphinx, a generic, sculpted finial.<sup>53</sup> It is never clear what we are looking at, a mythological character or a decorative motif, a type or a token.

As usual, things get especially interesting at the margins.<sup>54</sup> When sphinxes play a framing role, as with the Euergides Painter, their iconographic doubleness seems to license a certain liminality, as the composite monster can interact with decorative palmettes: here the sphinx's paw overlaps a stray tendril.<sup>55</sup> Such figures at once tug the florals into the diegetic space of the picture, and extract the sphinx from it. Relative to the youth with horses, the sphinxes are framing devices; relative to the palmettes, they are focal. The painter subtly exploits the different possibilities, as the sphinxes' curly tails resemble trailing tendrils, and the painter pairs them with the foreleg of one horse, the tail of another, to produce an overall weave of repeating shapes and subtle fretwork, overlapping and silhouette. The much-maligned term 'decorative' seems quite apt here, insofar as it captures the easy coexistence of different spatial regimes in the enlivening of patternwork and the patterning of habitable space.

<sup>53</sup> Attic black-figure pelike by the Eucharides Painter: Chicago, Smart Museum, inv. 1967.115.68 (BAPD 302992).

<sup>54</sup> Framing devices in Attic vase-painting have been discussed superbly by Jeffery Hurwit and, more recently, Nikolaus Dietrich. See Hurwit 1977; Hurwit 1992; Dietrich 2010, esp. 106–177 (with very thorough discussion of earlier bibliography); Platt and Squire 2017, esp. 13–21; Marconi 2017. See also Mitchell 2009, 162–169, and Kéi's chapter in this volume. Standard accounts of the topic outside of classical studies are to be found in Duro 1996.

<sup>55</sup> Again, the liminality of ornament is a major theme of Grabar 1992.





**Fig. 8.8:** Attic red-figure cup from the Wider Circle of the Nikosthenes Painter, showing orgiastic satyrs, early fifth century BC. Berlin, Antikensammlung: inv. 1964.4 (BAPD 275638).

A cup from the workshop of Nikosthenes, dating to the 490s BC, trades on just this liminality by taking it to a logical extreme (Fig. 8.8).<sup>56</sup> It shows an orgy of satyrs, whose anal eroticism is licensed, as it were, by the fact that they are not quite – not even – human. Satyrs are good to represent, as François Lissarrague famously put it, precisely because they provide a way to think the taboo, the anti-social, the impermissible.<sup>57</sup> In this case, however, it is worth noting that sexual transgression – the anal penetration of a masculine body, the fellation of one male by another – combines with pictorial transgression. The satyr at far right is preparing to assault an ‘ornamental’ Sphinx, a violation of pictorial decorum no less striking than the erotic gymnastics going on at centre. The excited *Mischwesen* oversteps a boundary, crosses a line, such that everything is mixed up, hybrid, plural.

There is usually no reason to find any special significance in the way Greek painters permeate such boundaries. For example, wayward spears and helmet crests overlap the upper frames of pictures all the time, and there seems to be no standing criterion to indicate whether such occurrences are important or insignificant. It all depends on whether or not, as they permit their figures to interact with their frames, overlappings simultaneously assert any significant cleavage or distinction between the two. A painter may articulate the relation between image and frame as an *antithesis*, such that blurrings or transgressions of that distinction can seem like contradic-

<sup>56</sup> Attic red-figure cup from the Wider Circle of the Nikosthenes Painter: Berlin, Antikensammlung, inv. 1964.4 (BAPD 275638). See Mitchell 2009, 163–164; Lissarrague 2013, 94.

<sup>57</sup> Lissarrague 2013.

tions or paradoxes, or as a *continuum*, such that there is really no border to overstep. The latter situation pertained in Geometric, which is why it makes no sense to see Geometric art as transgressive or self-referential in its articulation of figure and ornament, Late Archaic is different. The distinction turns on the articulation of a diegetic space. On the one hand, the Euergides Painter does not seem to care at all about whether there is or is not a consistent or coherent difference: he produces a continuous braid that incorporates stock motifs, an approach to which the very concept of transgression seems inapt. On the other, the Nikosthenic cup does establish a difference between tendrils, Sphinxes and satyrs, precisely in order to confound it: the joke of a satyr attacking a sphinx depends on the distinction. The painter establishes a reciprocity of sorts between the burlesque narrative – *Mischwesen* mixing among themselves in a vulgar fashion, literally transgressing each other's boundaries – and the visual joke of a picture that tries to penetrate its own frame. This is mixing as a metaphor, mixing as a concrete way of coming to terms both with social constraint and depictive possibility. If the Aristonothos krater thematised the distinction between figure and ornament as, among other things, one of community and legitimacy, the cup casts it as a matter of decorum and comedy. It is self-consciously 'naughty', hence deeply normalising – much like iambos.<sup>58</sup> But it works neither by stark juxtaposition, like Aristonothos, nor by continuous modulation, like the Euergides cup, but by a neat two-step of presentation and negation.

## Dismembering the scene: Douris

A cup by Douris, now in Fort Worth, presents an even more sophisticated version of this game (Figs. 8.9–8.10).<sup>59</sup> Dating to around 480 BC, it shows the death of Pentheus at the hands of his mother Agave. Aeschylus told this story, as did Euripides in the *Bacchae*: Pentheus, the king of Thebes, refuses to allow Dionysus to enter his city; in revenge, the god sends frenzy upon the women of the city, transforming them into maenads; Pentheus sneaks out to spy upon the spectacle; he is set upon by the women, including his mother, who are so crazed that they see him as an animal, and tear him apart.<sup>60</sup> Douris shows the climactic moment: Agave holds the upper body of her son; blood pours from the trunk, a bit of spine dangling horrifically; all around, extending to the other side of the cup, wild women, clad in leopard skins, cavort with bits and pieces of his legs, a thigh here, a calf there. 'One woman was carrying an arm', says Euripides, 'another a foot still in its boot, his flanks were stripped bare, the

<sup>58</sup> On *iambos* and decorum, see Kurke 2000: 69–72, with Kurke 1994; Rotstein 2010: 281–346 and *passim*; Kurke 2011.

<sup>59</sup> Fort Worth, Kimbell Art Museum, inv. AP2000.02 (BAPD 11686, *LIMC* 7, s.v. Pentheus, no. 43).

<sup>60</sup> Aeschylus, *TrGF*<sup>3</sup> F183, p. 299. See Jouan 1992; di Benedetto 2004.



flesh torn from them, and every woman, hands red with blood, hurled Pentheus' flesh about like a ball' (ἔφερε δ' ἡ μὲν ὠλένην, | ἡ δ' ἴχνος αὐταῖς ἀρβύλαις, γυμνοῦντο δὲ | πλευραὶ σπαραγμοῖς· πᾶσα δ' ἡματωμένη | χειρας διεσφαίριζε σάρκα Πενθέως).<sup>61</sup> Of course, there is no question of Euripides knowing the cup, although it is not impossible that Douris could have been influenced by Aeschylus' version of the myth.

The scene layers mixture, dismemberment, hallucination and depiction. Crucially, Douris adopts a stratagem that is quite common in early pedimental sculpture, rather less so in vase-painting: he lays down a distinction, a caesura as it were, between what 'we', the beholders, see and what 'they', the characters, see.<sup>62</sup> Late Archaic and Classical pediments often include at centre an epiphanic deity of whom the other figures are unaware: for instance, the Lapiths and Centaurs in the west pediment of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia take no notice of the awesome Apollo who rises in their midst; the Pisans assembled in the east pediment of the same building seem unaware that Zeus is presiding over them, save only the elderly seer, who gasps with wonder at the sight (cf. Fig. 2.4). In such cases, what the beholder sees (Apollo, Zeus) is not what the depicted characters see. The Douris cup is, if anything, more complex. 'We' see a dismembered boy; but that is not what Agave and the maenads see. 'They' see a forest creature (Euripides specifies a lion).<sup>63</sup> Eventually, of course, they will come to their senses and realise what they have done. But in this picture, that moment has not yet arrived. Here all is still festivity and madness, and the image's dramatic power, and indeed its pungent irony, derives from this intoxicated inability to distinguish truth from falsehood, reality from illusion. This failure of vision (or is it success?) is the equivalent of the theme of blinding in the Aristonothos krater: a figure for the power of wine to discombobulate the eye. In the words of the Dionysus of Euripides, 'You see now as you ought to see' (νῦν δ' ὁρᾷς ὅ χρὴ σ' ὁρᾶν, *Bacch.* 924).

Douris grounds this theme in the cup's formal structure and, specifically, the relation of figure to ornament, methodically stating and negating basic distinctions of figure and ground, image and frame, surface and depth. He does so by playing on the relation of the figural scene to the surrounding palmettes. At the right end of Side A, for instance, he has some fun with the assimilation of a palmette-tendril to the tail of a maenad's panther-skin. The maenad to the right of Pentheus wears a *pardalis* or panther-skin; the panther's tail is curiously stiff, hovering like a large letter 'S' between her and the dancing satyr nearby. This tail is visually continuous with the tendrils that snake from beneath the handles: the one curls behind the satyr's right elbow, the other behind his left knee. Douris arranges two matching volutes, one within the diegetic world of the myth, the other outside it – one is figure, the other ornament – precisely to confound or ironise the distinction.

<sup>61</sup> Eurip. *Bacch.* 1133–1136 (translation follows the Loeb edition).

<sup>62</sup> On this distinction in pedimental sculpture, see Neer 2010, 92–99.

<sup>63</sup> Beast (θηρός): Eurip. *Bacch.* 1108, 1180. Lion cub: Eurip. *Bacch.* 1142, 1174.



**Fig. 8.9:** Attic red-figure cup by Douris. Side A: the Death of Pentheus, c. 480 BC. Fort Worth, Kimbell Art Museum: inv. AP2000.02 (BAPD 11686).

On its own, this little joke is no more (and no less) unsettling than a pun might be in ordinary speech. There is nothing in it that undermines the intelligibility of the image as such. It is very like the play of tendril and tail on the Euergides Painter's cup (Fig. 8.7). True, the creeping tendril violates the space of the picture; but the space of the picture is, in this passage, not something that we have any reason to believe is inviolable, or even coherent, in the first place. Something like paradox does arise, however, in the combination of this matched pair of volutes with the dancing satyr at the extreme right of the scene. This latter figure pulls out all the stops of pictorial illusionism. By the standards of the time, he is radically foreshortened, turned frontally to the viewer and, more striking still, with his foot penetrating deep into the background – a depth, and a background, suggested first and foremost by the foot itself. Foreshortening implies just the sort of coherent spatial environment lacking in the other figures; it suggests a more or less fixed, more or less determinate relation in space between the beholder and the represented bodies, and between one represented body (or one part of a represented body) and another. The dancing satyr lays claim to pictorial space, to depth, in a way that his fellows do not. Yet he is also the crucial bridge between the panther's tail and the palmette's tendril, for he is superimposed over both. More than that: it is precisely the most strongly foreshortened part of his body that *overlaps* the tendril. Here the gears really do crash. Foreshortening and overlapping are both ways of representing space. Douris employs them in tandem, such that the satyr's leg is not just perpendicular to the painted surface,



Fig. 8.10: Side B of the same cup: the satyrs and maenads with *sparagmata* of Pentheus.

but also stands ‘in front of’ the tendril. That tendril, however, cannot and should not inhabit the same space as the satyr: it is not part of the diegetic world of the myth. In short, because the floral lies, impossibly, behind the foot, the establishment of space that goes with foreshortening collapses. Overlapping, which ought by rights to complement the foreshortening, now contradicts it. Where the Euergides Painter drew a continuum, plaiting figures and tendrils around the outside of a cup like a pictorial wreath, Douris draws conflict and carnage.

Lest this account seem to pay too much attention to feet and thighs, notice that the maenads are toting exactly these body parts elsewhere on the vase, holding them carefully over palmettes and tendrils: making legs and thighs discontinuous, doing violence to them and wrenching them out of context, is what this picture is all about. Douris is capable of great subtlety in this regard: note, in particular, what happens when our satyr’s right leg disappears behind the maenad’s skirts, the swelling muscle of his calf peeking out; yet the *rear* contour of her leg, visible through the sheer fabric, comes to seem like the *front* contour of his own, the inside of her knee becomes his kneecap, the hem of her garment becomes the back of his heel. His leg is there and it is not, we both see and do not see under the wine-god’s spell.

It is probably no coincidence that such games of perception should occur in a scene that narrates illusion and dismemberment. Our position is not, in the end, so different from that of the Theban queen. For us, as for her, the power of Dionysus distorts vision itself; the result, in each case, is disarticulation and disjunction,

whether of Pentheus or of *the scene itself*. Douris effects a sort of rending or *sparagmos* (σπαράγμός) of the picture – establishing the conditions of spatial coherence, of a distinction between figure and ornament, only to negate them – even as he disarticulates what the beholder sees from what the depicted characters see. In short, the foreshortened foot effects a *Gestalt* switch similar to, but not identical with, the rosettes on the Aristonothos krater. The difference being that now the shifting motif is fully integrated into the very diegetic world it dismembers.

## Public art and ‘ornamental iconography’

The ornamental, to repeat, ‘disappears, buries itself, effaces itself, melts away at the moment it deploys its greatest energy’. The gambit of Aristonothos, Douris and the anonymous Nikosthenic painter is to make ornament reappear, to ‘disinter’ it and reconstitute it. These differences, however, are not merely formal but social: they establish conditions of intelligibility and contradiction that are not intrinsic but relational. All of these pots thematise an essential problem of *community*: the necessity, and the limitation, of mutual attunement in perception. As noted earlier, this social dimension was integral to Vernant’s account of the history of Archaic figuration, which he saw as moving from relatively obscure, talismanic artefacts, comprehensible only to elites, to styles of realism that the whole *polis* could appreciate.<sup>64</sup> Aristonothos is clearest on this point, insofar as he articulates the encounters of Greeks with the West in terms of vision and blindness, but the erotic fellowship of satyrs on the Nikosthenic cup, and the vicissitudes of the Cadmean house on the one by Douris, are no less powerful in their identification of community with perceptual attunement.

Yet it is, arguably, in public art that these issues are most salient, for it is here the stakes of attunement are highest. If the issue of ornament is always that of a community of beholders, or a shared *phronêsis* in seeing, then that community will (like any other) have internal divisions. Public art makes these divisions visible. This brings us to architecture.

It by no means obvious what counts as ornament, what as figure, in architectural sculpture – even if, thanks to Vitruvius, architectural ornament has been very nearly paradigmatic of ornament in general.<sup>65</sup> Tonio Hölscher has recently emphasised the overall obscurity – both literal and figural – of much architectural sculpture in Greece, suggesting that it is largely ‘decorative’, and this insight is very much worth pursuing.<sup>66</sup> In the case of the so-called Erechtheum at Athens, for instance, part of

<sup>64</sup> Vernant 2006, 333–349.

<sup>65</sup> See, e.g., Hersey 1988; Picon 2016.

<sup>66</sup> Hölscher 2009 – along with Hölscher’s chapter in this volume.

the job of a figural sculpture is, curiously enough, to make itself decorative or ornamental, to efface itself and melt away. The Erechtheum building boasts some of the most exquisite ornament in the history of Greek architecture, including guilloches inlaid with coloured glass beads. It also had a sculpted frieze on the outside, which employed an unusual technique whereby the figures were carved in white marble and then dowelled into slabs of blue limestone.<sup>67</sup> The frieze is quite fragmentary, so it can be difficult to identify the scenes. The same building also featured the famous caryatid porch: six maidens serving as columns. In keeping with the iconographic paradigm of current scholarship, the big question with the caryatids is: who are they? Participants in the Panathenaic procession, mourners for Cecrops, ancient princesses transported into constellations, a lyric chorus – all have been mooted in recent years.<sup>68</sup>

Yet there exists an exactly contemporary description of both the Erechtheum frieze and the caryatids: an ecphrasis of sorts, if only we could recognise it. This description comes in the form of public records concerned the carving of the frieze and the construction of the building.<sup>69</sup> The accounts, dating between 409 and 406 BC, tell us exactly who carved which figure and how much he was paid, and along the way they describe each figure:<sup>70</sup>

[ὄν τὸ δ]όρυ *héχοντα*, *ῬΔ*. Φυρόμα-  
 [χος *Κε*]φισιεύς, τὸν νεανίσκο-  
 [ν τὸ]ν παρὰ τὸν θόρακα, *ῬΔ*. Πραχ-  
 [σίας] ἐμ *Μελίτει* *χοικῶν*, τὸν *h*-  
 [ἵππο]ν καὶ τὸν *hoπισθοφανῆ* τ-  
 [ὄν πα]ρακρόοντα, *ΗΔΔ*. Ἀντιφάν-  
 [ε*ς* *heκ*] *Κεραμέον*, τὸ ἄρμα καὶ τ-  
 [ὄν νε]ανίσκον καὶ τὸ *hίππο* τὸ  
 [ζευγ]νυμένο, *ΗΗΔΔΔΔ*. Φυρόμαχ-  
 [ος *Κε*]φισιεύς, τὸν *hάγοντα* τὸ-  
 [ν *hί*]ππον, *ῬΔ*: *Μυννίον* *haγρυλῆ*-  
 [σι] *χοικῶν*, τὸν *hίππον* καὶ τὸν  
 [*hά*]νδρα τὸν *heπικρόοντα* καὶ  
 [τῆ]ν στέλεν *hύστερον* προσέθ-  
 [ε*κ*]ε : *ΗΔΔΓ'Η*. Σῶκλος *haλοπεκῆ*-  
 [σι] *χοικῶν*, τὸν τὸν *χαλινὸν* *hé*-  
 [χο]ντα, *ῬΔ*: Φυρόμαχος *Κεφισι*-  
 [ύς], τὸν *hάνδρα* τὸν *heπὶ* τῆς *βα*-  
 [κτ]ερίας εἰστεκότα τὸν παρὰ  
 [τὸ]ν βομόν, *ῬΔ*: *hίαςος* *Κολλυτε*-  
 [ύς], τὴν γυναῖκα *ἔ*ι *ἐ* παῖς προσ-  
 [πέ]πτοκε, *ῬΔΔΔ*

67 The basic publication of the Erechtheum frieze is Boulter 1970.

68 Scholl 1995; Robertson 1996, 34; Gaifman, forthcoming.

69 *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 474–476. See Stevens et al. 1927, 278, 416–422, 457.

70 *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 476 ll. 159–180.

For the man holding the spear 60 drachmas. [To] Phyromachos of Kephisia, [for] the young man with the breastplate: 60 drachmas. [To] Praxias living in Melite, [for] the horse and the man who is visible behind it and who strikes its flank: 120 drachmas. [To] Antiphanes from Kerameis, [for] the chariot, the young man, and the horse being harnessed: 240 drachmas. [To] Phyromachos of Kephisia, [for] the one leading the horse: 60 drachmas. [To] Mynnion living in Argyle, [for] the horse and the man striking it and the stele which he added later: 127 drachmas. [To] Soklos resident at Alopeke, [for] the man holding the bridle: 60 drachmas. [To] Phyromachos of Kephisia, [for] the man leaning on his staff beside the altar: 60 drachmas. [To] Iasos of Kollytos, [for] the woman embraced by the girl: 80 drachmas.

And so on. Here we have exactly contemporary descriptions of the sculpture, designed for a public readership at the apogee of the radical democracy. What do they tell us about ancient habits of beholding?

Of particular interest is the following entry (*IG* I<sup>3</sup> 476 ll. 150–151): [..]ς τ[ὸ]ν γρ[ά]φοντα νεα[ν]ίσ[κο]ν | καὶ τ[ὸ]ν πρ[ο]σ[ε]στ[ῆ]τα αὐτοῦ: Η. ('For the youth who is drawing/writing and the man standing by him: 100 drachmas'). This description matches a pair of surviving figures (Fig. 8.11).<sup>71</sup> The crouching figure is performing a very specific action and is clearly part of a larger narrative of some sort: perhaps mythological (as on the Hephaistion frieze), perhaps ritual (as on the Parthenon frieze), perhaps historical (as on the Nike temple frieze). The inscription, however, is uninformative. One of the building accounts even mentions the porch with the caryatids, to which it refers simply as 'maidens', *korai*.<sup>72</sup> In short, the building accounts fail to provide positive identification for any figure: they name the sculptors, but not the figures they carved. Instead, they provide thumbnail descriptions, like 'the man holding the spear'. Modern scholars have been able to identify some of the figures – Apollo, for instance, has an *omphalos* on his lap – but no thanks to the public records.<sup>73</sup>

The Erechtheum accounts have been mined for the information they provide about workshop organisation and payment systems, but neglected by iconographers.<sup>74</sup> Yet the importance of these texts for our understanding of Athenian art can hardly be overstated. As public records, they tell us what the Athenian state believed an average Athenian would see when looking at the sculpture. Apparently, the state felt that it could not count on the average Athenian to be able to make sense of the iconography, so it used simpler, more general descriptors. The clear implication is that, as a practical matter, *most people did not know what the frieze represented, or who the caryatids were*. Indeed, it is not even clear that the functionaries who composed this document knew what they were talking about; they may have been as mystified as everyone else. Here it is well to recall that, on the best estimates, literacy in Athens ran at about 5–10 per cent; the democracy's habit of carving texts onto stone was as

<sup>71</sup> Athens, Acropolis Museum, inv. 1073. Boulter 1970, 19–20; Holtzmann 2000.

<sup>72</sup> *IG* I<sup>3</sup> 474 l. 86.

<sup>73</sup> Apollo: Athens, Acropolis Museum, inv. 1293; Boulter 1970, 18–19.

<sup>74</sup> See, e.g., Randall Jr. 1953; Lambert 2000; Pakkanen 2006.

much symbolic as practical, an attempt to impress and overwhelm an illiterate public as much to inform.<sup>75</sup>

The Erechtheum inscriptions may be set alongside an almost exactly contemporary passage from the *Ion* of Euripides (c. 414 BC). Some Athenian women are visiting Delphi; as they look at the sculptures (presumably the metopes) on the temple of Apollo, they read out the iconography:<sup>76</sup>

- ἰδοῦ, τᾷδ' ἄθρησον·  
Λερναῖον ὕδραν ἐναίρει  
χρυσέαις ἄρπαις ὁ Διὸς παῖς·  
φίλα, πρόσιδ' ὅσσοις.
- ὁρῶ. καὶ πέλας ἄλλος αὐ-  
τοῦ πανὸν πυρίφλεκτον αἴ-  
ρει τις· ἄρ' ὃς ἐμαῖσι μυ-  
θεύεται παρὰ πήναις,  
ἀσπιστὰς Ἰόλαος, ὃς  
κοινούς αἰρόμενος πόνους  
Δίῳ παιδὶ συναντλεῖ;
- καὶ μὲν τόνδ' ἄθρησον  
πτεροῦντος ἔφεδρον ἵππου·  
τὰν πῦρ πνέουσιν ἐναίρει  
τρισώματον ἀλκάν.
- πάντα τοι βλέφαρον διώκω.  
σκέψαι κλόνον ἐν τείχε- λαῖνοισι Γιγάντων.
- τῷδε δερκόμεσθ', ὦ φίλαι. †
- λεύσσεις οὖν ἐπ' Ἐγκελάδῳ  
γοργωπὸν πάλλουσαν ἵτιν ...;
- λεύσσω Παλλάδ', ἐμὴν θεόν.

– Look! come see, the son of Zeus is killing the Lernean Hydra with a golden sickle; my dear, look at it!

– I see it. And another near him, who is raising a fiery torch, is he the one whose story is told when I am at my loom, the warrior Iolaus, who joins with the son of Zeus in bearing his labours?

– And look at this one sitting on a winged horse; he is killing the mighty fire-breathing creature that has three bodies.

– I am glancing around everywhere. See the Battle of the Giants, on the stone walls.

– I am looking at it, my friends.

– Do you see the one brandishing her Gorgon shield against Enkelados?

– I see Pallas, my own goddess ....

<sup>75</sup> Harris 1989, 90; Thomas 2009. Pébarthe 2006 argues for higher rates, as does Missiou 2011; both have met with scepticism.

<sup>76</sup> Eurip. *Ion* 190–210. On this passage, see Steiber 2011, 284–302, with earlier bibliography. On the metopes of the temple at Delphi, see Bookidis 1967, 189–192; Neer 2004, 84–85 (with reference to incomprehensible iconography).

And so on. The women of the chorus are servants of an Athenian princess: they actually live on the Acropolis, in the predecessor of the Erechtheum. Perhaps for this reason, they are capable of correctly identifying figures by iconography; they adduce details (a sickle, a torch, a Gorgon shield) and propose names. It has been argued that this display of skilful beholding is paradigmatic of everyday viewing experience, a precious guide for modern art historians.<sup>77</sup> Yet the Erechtheum inscriptions suggest just the opposite. The inscriptions do not presuppose even basic literacy in matters of iconography: they do not assume that readers or auditors can match proper names to iconographic details as the chorus does, or even that they will be inclined to try.

There is, in short, a conflict in the evidence, as the buildings accounts suggest one thing, Euripides another. Because the public record is purely functional, conveying information in as economical way as possible, it seems a better guide to the everyday experience of sculpture. 'I see Pallas, I see, I see,' repeat the women of the *Ion*, but the building accounts tell us that that is exactly *not* the sort of thing that an average Athenian could be counted on to say when confronted with the sculptures of Pallas' own temple at Athens. The average Athenian could only be counted to see something like 'a man holding a bridle', 'a young man drawing', a 'maiden' ... or a 'rosette'. Whoever oversaw the building project must have known as much.

A calculated obscurity may seem an odd strategy for public art, but it has ample precedent in Greek poetry and elsewhere. Pindar, for instance, could boast of his own incomprehensibility: 'I have many swift arrows in their quiver under my arm; they speak to the perspicacious, but the crowd needs hermeneuts' (πολλά μοι ὑπ' ἀγκῶνος ὠκέα βέλη | ἔνδον ἐντὶ φαρέτρας | φωνάεντα συνετοῖσιν· ἐς δὲ τὸ πᾶν ἐρμανέων | χατίζει, *Ol.* 2.82–86).<sup>78</sup> We might approach sculpture on similar terms, and distinguish the 'perspicacious' (συνετοί) from the masses (τὸ πᾶν). It bears repeating that the chorus of the *Ion* is an insider group, attendant on Creusa the princess of Athens. If its ecphrasis is strikingly dissimilar from the democracy's own building accounts, the contrast is nonetheless revealing. It brings out a *social differential* to the capacity to see architectural sculpture. Euripides' well-born characters inhabit a privileged visual world. Their perceptions exemplify what Jacques Rancière has called the 'distribution of the sensible', the distribution or sharing out of the capacity even to see, to have visible for one.<sup>79</sup> The Erechtheum, for all that it is democratic, public art, instantiates a differential between those who can see and those who cannot, those who are perspicacious and those who require hermeneuts.

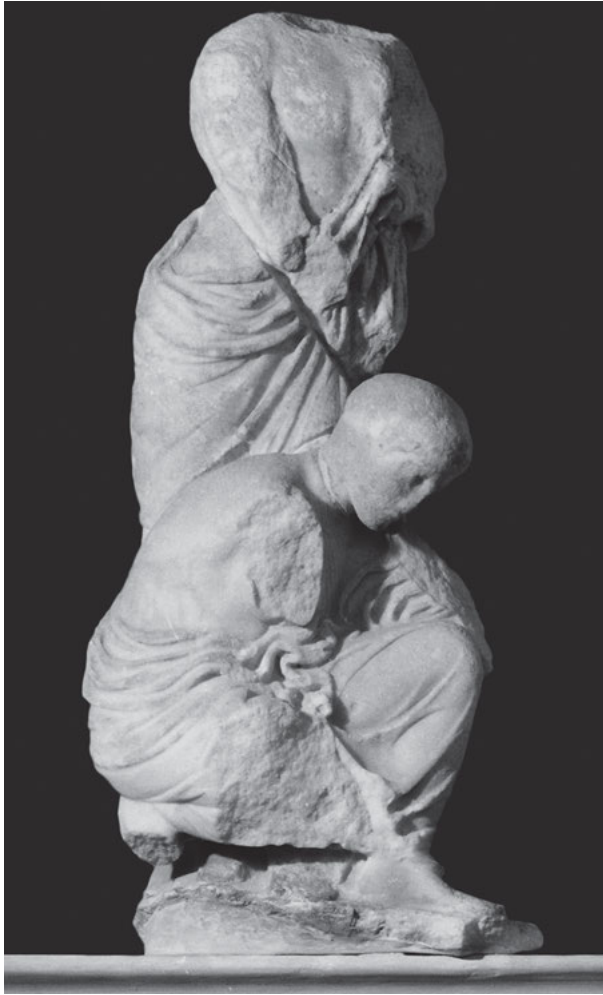
Even Derrida threw up his hands at the question of whether a caryatid is or is not a *parergon*: 'So as not to add to these complications', he wrote, 'I shall leave to

<sup>77</sup> Marconi 2009, 168.

<sup>78</sup> On this thorny passage which, by virtue of its obscurity, practically enacts its own statement, see Willcock 1995, 161–162.

<sup>79</sup> Rancière 2000.





**Fig. 8.11:** Athens, Temple of Athena Polias ('Erechtheum'): fragment of frieze with standing male and kneeling youth, c. 408/407 BC. Athens, Acropolis Museum: inv. 1073.

one side, provisionally, the case of columns in the form of the human body'.<sup>80</sup> But if ornament is provisionally, relatively, that which 'disappears, buries itself, effaces itself, melts away at the moment it deploys its greatest energy', then the architectural sculpture of the Acropolis both was and was not ornament. It all depended on who was looking at it, under what circumstances. If the average Athenian could not understand iconography then this frieze of small, inscrutable figures will have been no more meaningful than a generic band of waterfowl on a Geometric pot, except to those in the know. The caryatids, for instance, might have been generic 'maidens', or they might have been specific characters out of mythical history, depending on who

<sup>80</sup> Derrida 1987, 59.

was looking – and the difference between these visual experiences was a function of a distribution or social rationing of sensibility.

In such cases, *iconography itself* will have been ornament, *iconography* will have disappeared, buried itself, melted away. The difference between a woman and a goddess, which iconography typically secures, is an aspect of the building that ‘the many’ are simply not in a position to see. Once again, it is a matter of know-how, a *phronêsis* of the visible, and one function of public art is to establish a space for such games of vision. That is where we should be looking for the ideology of this monument, not in the symbolism of this or that iconographic detail. Ideology is upstream from iconography: it is here, in the distinction of figure and ornament, which is first and foremost a social one. Iconography itself can be ornamental when it is effectively illegible, when it is produced precisely to reiterate a distinction between, as Pindar puts it, the ‘perspicacious’ (συνετοί) and the masses (τὸ πᾶν).

In the case of Geometric, we saw the perceptual difference between figure and ground, figure and ornament, as essentially flexible and *ad hoc* – an improvisatory approach so open to misunderstanding as to presuppose a great deal of acculturation on the part of beholders. The Aristonothos krater cast this same matter in terms of violence – a confrontation, whether in myth or in the present day, between Greeks and the West, Etruscans and Cyclopes. The capacity to see, to navigate pictorial space, is not uniform but is, on the contrary, a marker of difference. Douris casts the matter in terms of a confrontation, not with the Etruscan but with wine and Dionysus. The difference between figure and ornament is still relative, and the question is still shot with violence, but the tragedy of Pentheus is precisely one of a failure of vision under intoxication. Finally, with the Erechtheum, architecture itself becomes simultaneously figure and ornament. Here the distinction is, in itself, the very mechanism of a differential of the power to see. Even under what Plato famously called *theatrocracy*, ‘rule of the beholders’, some could see more than others – and the architectural adornment of the city is the establishment of social and political difference.<sup>81</sup> It is here that the distinction between figure and ornament becomes that of political and social visibility, where the question of figure and ornament becomes, strictly speaking, ideological. If we do not know, in advance, the limits of the ornamental, then that is because, ultimately, we do not know the limits of our polities.

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<sup>81</sup> Pl. *Leg.* 701a.

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Verity Platt

## Of sponges and stones: Matter and ornament in Roman painting

The category of ornament has proven deeply problematic for western art and aesthetics, and has been continually renegotiated in both theory and practice since the eighteenth century. In particular, our cultural discomfort finds its Ur-text in Kant's 1790 *Critique of Judgment*, which in its 'Analytic of the Beautiful' attempts to distinguish 'pure' or 'disinterested' judgment from an empiricism grounded in the material.<sup>1</sup> Kant's distinction between the delights of dematerialised 'form' and embodied 'sensation' has had a profound influence on our notion of 'Art', and aligns the category of ornament firmly with the gaudy delights of mere matter – with notions of the supplemental, the extraneous and the excessive.<sup>2</sup> In a formal sense, ornament finds its most influential Kantian expression in the concept of *parerga*, 'external complements' exemplified by columns, drapery or picture-frames.<sup>3</sup> Its material embodiment, however, is aligned with the yet more extraneous gilding of frames – a surface of *Schmuck*, or 'finery', which detracts from and even undermines the beauty of the work itself.<sup>4</sup>

As this volume explores, any examination of Graeco-Roman notions of ornament requires us to look behind and beneath this Kantian edifice. Not only are the function and value of the supplemental or 'parergonal' to be reappraised, but (as Nicola Barham in particular argues in her contribution) the very relevance of such categories to pre-Enlightenment aesthetic traditions invites radical questioning. In this chapter, I would like to prise open the relationship between ornament and matter, focusing on Roman culture of the first century AD, and its reception of the Greek concept of materialism. In this, I take my cue from a renewed interest in ancient materialisms in classical studies (itself driven by the so-called 'material turn' that has gripped the twenty-

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1 Kant 1793 (in the 'Third Moment', § 14) [German edition of 1924; English translation in Kant 1987]. On Kant's distinction between the 'empirical' [*das Empirische*] and the 'pure' [*das Reine*], see Schaper 1979, 78–98; Gulyga 1987, 170–175; Ferry 1993, 77–113; and Kemal 1997. Cf. also Squire's introduction to this volume, 18–20, along with Neer's chapter (esp. 206–209).

2 Kant 1987, 71 (= 1924, 64): for Kant, pure judgment of taste responds not to 'that which gratifies us in sensation' [*was in der Empfindung vergnügt*], but to 'that which pleases by means of its form' [*was durch seine Form gefällt*]. On Kant's influence, see also Reinhardt's chapter in this book.

3 On Kant's application of the term *parergon* to ornaments [*Zieraten*] in his second and third editions of the *Critique* (1793 and 1799), see Kemal 1997, 68–72, and Marriner 2002, together with Squire in the introduction, 19. For an analysis of the term *parergon* in relation to concepts of framing (not least Derrida's deconstructionist response, 1987, 37–82), see Platt and Squire 2017, 38–59, with further bibliography.

4 For the passage (Kant 1987, 72 = 1924, 65), cf. Squire's introduction, 18–19.

first century humanities across multiple disciplines).<sup>5</sup> What happens to ornament when we rehabilitate, and carefully historicise, the notion of matter, setting aside a Kantian discomfort with *Schmuck*? And what happens to matter when Roman notions of *ornamentum* (or its Greek equivalent *kosmos*), are liberated from the aesthetic hierarchies of Enlightened ‘disinterest’? As we shall see, such an approach invites reconsideration of the relationship between medium, form, and meaning, opening up new questions about the aesthetic, biological and cosmological systems at work within ancient visual culture.

## Ornament and the structure of matter

Current reappraisals of ornament from an art-historical perspective – as exemplified by this volume itself – come as no coincidence. We inhabit and move through a contemporary sphere in which ornament is undergoing radical rehabilitation, not least in architectural reformulations of its relationship to visual representation, structure and environment.<sup>6</sup> The modernist moment that prompted Adolf Loos to deem ornament a criminal offence now looks to be something of an aberration, rather than the dawn of a new Enlightenment – one itself informed by moral and aesthetic hierarchies that today hold us less firmly in their grasp.<sup>7</sup> The old value systems no longer pertain to distinctions such as those between the fine and the decorative or ‘applied’ arts – between structure and surface, content and frame, form and meaning.<sup>8</sup> And now that the concept of ornament is more rarely called upon to police and stratify

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<sup>5</sup> On the ‘material turn’ in studies of classical aesthetics in particular, see Porter 2010; in the context of classical art history, cf. Platt 2016. For an overview of the ‘material turn’ in relation to material culture studies more broadly, see Miller 2013; in the context of the humanities at large, cf. Coole and Frost 2010.

<sup>6</sup> On the ‘return of ornament’ in contemporary architecture, see Picon 2013 and 2016. For a broad range of recent examples, see Moussavi and Kubo 2006, on the relationship between structure, ornament and affect in architectural design. For examples of a renewed interest in ornament in the field of art history, see the essays gathered in Necipoğlu and Payne 2016 (focusing on art from the mediaeval world to modernity).

<sup>7</sup> For an English translation, see Loos 1998, 167–176: the essay was first published in French as ‘Ornement et crime’ in *Les cahiers d’aujourd’hui* 5 (June 1913), 247–256 – and in German as ‘Ornament und Verbrechen’, in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* (24 October 1929). For analysis of Loos’ infamous essay in the context of his broader aesthetics and response to nineteenth-century ornament, see Long 1997 and 2012; Stewart 2000 (esp. 172–178); and Trilling 2003, 119–136. Long, in particular, highlights how Loos’ rather more subtle arguments about ornament were distorted during the 1920s and 30s in order to establish a clear lineage for architectural functionalism (Long 1997, 444). Cf. also Squire’s introduction to this volume, 20–21.

<sup>8</sup> See in particular the essays collected in Platt and Squire 2017.

those value systems, contemporary architects are rediscovering its communicative and affective potential.

Twenty-first-century buildings celebrate ornament's capacity to influence the formation of communities, shape the perceptual experience of spaces, encourage a recognition of craftsmanship and draw attention to materials.<sup>9</sup> In such structures, ornament's role is reconfigured. Rather than a mere accessory, it is promoted as a vital expression of order, which can itself perform structural functions, whilst evoking or making visible the deeper structures of our world – whether organic, social or computational. It is no accident that the return to ornament has been encouraged and in part facilitated by digital modelling, which facilitates designs that draw on complex structures in order to integrate the functional and the aesthetic.<sup>10</sup> Biomimetic design, for example, draws upon the evolutionary principles that characterise living organisms.<sup>11</sup> Other buildings take their lead from chemical structures that underpin life itself. Consider the 'Beijing Water Cube' – the Chinese National Aquatics Centre designed by an international consortium of architects and engineers for the 2008 Olympics (Fig. 9.1).<sup>12</sup> Intrigued by 'images of foam, soap bubbles, molecules and corals, and the organic structures behind them', the team based their design upon a Weaire-Phelan structure.<sup>13</sup> Derived from the natural pattern formed by bubbles in foam, this seemingly irregular composition is informed by the same geometry as certain molecular structures in crystals. Random yet logically organised, decorative

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**9** Some of the most experimental uses of ornament in contemporary architecture are by the Swiss firm Herzog & de Meuron: see for example their Technical School Library in Eberswalde (1996), Prada Epicentre in Tokyo (2003) and Museum der Kulturen in Basel (2011), together with the discussion of ornament, structure and space in Chevrier and Herzog 2010, and Herzog's own early musings on the function of ornament in *Die verborgene Geometrie der Natur* (a lecture delivered in 1984, published in Herzog 1997). On the importance of 'ornament' in the formation of communities, see Neer's chapter in the volume.

**10** See especially Moussavi and Kubo 2006 and Picon 2016, on the potential of digital modelling for creative integrations of structure and ornament.

**11** For a fascinating showcase of contemporary 'naturalising architecture', see Brayer and Migayrou 2013, published in conjunction with the ninth ArchiLab Exhibition: 'Henceforth architecture is involved in "matter", which is turning out to be both effective and capable of doing away with the distinction between nature and artifice, ushering in a new order of hybridization. How are we to think about this new ecology of design, a condition that is as architectural as it is political and cultural, within which nature and architecture merge?' For contemporary building design that thoroughly integrates the biological, functional and aesthetic by drawing on sophisticated organisations in nature, see the work of Jenny Sabin, discussed in Kolatan and Sabin 2010 and Sabin 2015.

**12** The consortium included the Australian firm PTW Architects, the Arup Australasia engineering group, the China State Construction Engineering Corporation (CSCEC), and the CSCEC Shenzhen Design Institute: see C. A. Pearson's article ('National swimming center', *Architectural Record*, 19 July 2008), available online at at: [www.arup.com/projects/chinese\\_national\\_aquatics\\_center](http://www.arup.com/projects/chinese_national_aquatics_center).

**13** Kurt Wagner of PTW Architects, quoted at: [www.theguardian.com/science/2004/may/06/research.science1](http://www.theguardian.com/science/2004/may/06/research.science1). For the original Weaire-Phelan hypothesis, see Weaire and Phelan 1994.



**Fig. 9.1:** The Chinese National Aquatics Centre, Beijing, 2008.

yet functional, organic yet mathematical, the building's outer 'skin' renders visible the nature of its material contents, whilst constituting a strong, lightweight structural support system for the building itself. The result is a building that simultaneously subverts and celebrates the paradoxes of ornament, in a manner both playful and deeply serious.

Twenty-first century Beijing is far from Roman Italy. Yet the integration of structure and aesthetics found in the Water Cube exemplifies an approach to ornament that aligns more closely with antiquity than we might initially assume. Ancient and modern meet in the notion that inviting visual detail on the surface or 'envelope' of a building might also give form to an underlying truth about the structure of matter itself. As several contributions to this volume remind us, the Greek term *kosmos* has a twofold significance, encompassing both the (micro)cosmetic and the (macro) cosmic – both delightful surface detail and complex world system.<sup>14</sup> Likewise, as Nicola Barham makes clear, careful analysis of the Latin *ornamentum* reveals that it is applied to all material furnishings (including statues, paintings and reliefs) that bring honour, status and meaning to the structures of which they are part.<sup>15</sup> When such terms are analysed in any detail, distinctions between underlying structure and 'applied' decoration, or between the ornamental and the figural, simply fall away. All art, in antiquity, we might say, is 'applied', in that it is embedded within specific contexts and frameworks rather than operating within an autonomous aesthetic sphere.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> On the complex vocabulary of ornament in antiquity, see Raulet and Schmidt 2001, Marconi 2004, Hölscher 2009 and Volk 2009, 18–23, with Squire's introduction, 2, n.3; cf. also the chapters by e.g. Hölscher, Neer, Barham and Reinhardt. On different uses of *kosmos* in Greek philosophy, see Puhvel 1976 – along with Dietrich's chapter in this volume (on the implications for approaching Archaic Greek sculpture).

<sup>15</sup> See Barham's chapter in this volume – and, in more detail, Barham 2015.

<sup>16</sup> On the question of the 'embeddedness' of ancient art, see Tanner 2006 and the essays gathered in Platt and Squire 2010, together with those collected in Platt and Squire 2017.

And while antiquity certainly had its own moral and aesthetic hierarchies (some of them highly influential on later western thought), these do not map directly onto the conceptual systems that generated such *discomfort* with ornament between the eighteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The ‘problem’ of ornament is deeply bound to ideas about the function of the art object and the nature of representation that have been applied to the aesthetic sphere *tout court*. In particular, it stems from a formulation of the relationship between form, matter and meaning that originated in Platonic ontologies of the image and was later filtered through Christian, and especially Protestant, forms of dualism.<sup>17</sup> The Kantian category of the ornamental, as that which is supplemental, excessive, merely ‘decorative’, is in this sense a product of the problem of representation. Platonic formulations of *mimêsis*, in particular, focus attention on the figural (over the material), while separating form and meaning from their material vehicles, locating them within a dematerialised realm of the conceptual or spiritual.<sup>18</sup> Those ‘parergonal’ features that remain, if they are not to be ‘saved’ by meaning conferred through their potential symbolic or allegorical function (elevated, that is, by hermeneutic analysis), are condemned to the status of form without meaning, or worse, Joshua Reynolds’ ‘mere matter’, Kant’s *Schmuck*, Loos’ ‘smear’.<sup>19</sup>

The discourse of ancient aesthetics, however, was always polyphonic, not least in its approach to the relationship between the material and the conceptual. In particular, antiquity fostered several schools of philosophical materialism which, in their very ontological underpinnings, might encourage us to re-think the notion of ‘mere matter’. The question that drives this chapter is thus twofold. First, what kind of a

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**17** On a Platonic (and Aristotelian) adherence to formalism over materialism, and its influence on the classical tradition, see Porter 2003 and 2010, 14–17, 70–138 (though note the concerns of Halliwell 2012 that this sharp distinction ignores more subtle treatments of the relationship between matter and form in both Platonic and Aristotelian aesthetics). For a fascinating account of Protestant antipathy to ornament, see Heuer 2016, with Koerner 2004 and Squire 2009, 15–89, on the broader influence of Protestant theories of the image.

**18** For explorations of how Platonic ontologies of representation play out in relation to the transcendental qualities of visual form, see Nightingale 2004 and Platt 2014.

**19** As Joshua Reynolds proclaimed in the opening to his *Fourth Discourse* (1771): ‘The value and rank of every art is in proportion to the mental labour employed in it, or the mental pleasure produced by it. As this principle is observed or neglected, our profession becomes either a liberal art, or a mechanical trade. In the hands of one man it makes the highest pretensions, as it is addressed to the noble faculties: in those of another it is reduced to a *mere matter* of ornament; and the painter has but the humble province of furnishing our apartments with elegance’ (Reynolds 1842, 52, my italics). On Kant’s notion of ornament as *Schmuck*, see above, 241–242. In ‘Ornament and crime’, Loos likens ornament to ‘The first work of art, the first artistic act which the first artist, in order to rid himself of his surplus energy, smeared [*schmierte*] on the wall’ (*Das erste kunstwerk, die erste künstlerische tat, die der erste Künstler, um seine überschüssigkeiten los zu werden, an die wand schmierte*). On the dominance of hermeneutics in the classical tradition see Porter 2010, with Squire 2009 on the implications for approaching the relationship between the visual and the verbal.

theory of ornament might apply within a conceptual system less beholden to traditions of idealism that both exalt and dematerialise form? And second, how are we to understand ‘ornament’ within a materialist world-order where mind itself is a form of matter, and the entirety of matter is infused with a motivating life-force?

In asking these questions, I do not mean to downplay the significance of Platonism to ancient theories of the image, but rather to recognise that the ontological hierarchies which governed Graeco-Roman concepts of *mimêsis* existed alongside alternative approaches to the visual arts, themselves informed by different schools of metaphysics.<sup>20</sup> Here ancient Stoicism, in particular, offers an approach to ornament that emerges from a teleologically organised, materialist world-order in which everything plays its part, wherein *kosmos* is itself a ‘system of heaven and earth and the natures contained in these’.<sup>21</sup> As Chrysippus (echoed by Posidonius) is said to have claimed, ‘the cosmos is a living being (ζῶον), endowed with soul and reason (ἐμψυχον καὶ λογικόν)’.<sup>22</sup> As a vital, rational, integrated and purposeful entity, the Stoic cosmos evinces a unity and order, a ‘fitness’ that obviates any notion of the parergonal.<sup>23</sup> While such a system certainly has its own hierarchies of being – dependent on an ascending gradation of ‘rational’ *pneuma* distributed through minerals, plants, animals and humans – each is nevertheless understood to sustain the intelligent workings of the whole.<sup>24</sup> In a corporeal system of multiple parts, each possessing a specific role in the functioning of the entire body, aesthetic hierarchies based on notions of utility over supplementarity or form over matter start to look less pertinent.

What, then, are the implications of such a materialist cosmology for material culture itself? In what follows, I explore two potential avenues of inquiry. First, I look to a text that is fundamental to any analysis of the materiality of ancient art – Pliny the Elder’s *Natural History*, written in the AD 70s. While Pliny does not overtly subscribe to a single philosophical approach, demonstrating an eclecticism that is in keeping with both his intellectual milieu and the ‘encyclopaedic’ ambitions of his work, the

<sup>20</sup> For a more thorough exploration of this issue, see Platt forthcoming. On the materialist foundations of Stoic ontology, see Long and Sedley 1987, I.162–166; Sedley 2005, 382–411; and Sellars 2006, 81–106. On the complexities of Stoic theories of matter (and their reinterpretation of Plato’s *Timaeus*), see Gourinat 2009.

<sup>21</sup> SVF II.527.11–13 (= *Stob.* 1.184.8–10), attributed to Chrysippus (κόσμον δ’εἶναι φησιν ὁ Χρυσίππος σύστημα ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς καὶ τῶν ἐν τούτοις φύσεων): see Furley 2008, 412. For attempted reconstructions of Stoic cosmology, see Hahm 1977, Lapidge 1978 and Sedley 2005, 382–411. For eloquent accounts of Stoic cosmology as applied to Roman drama and didactic poetry respectively, see Rosenmeyer 1989, 93–113 (on Senecan drama); and Volk 2009, 14–57 (on Manilius).

<sup>22</sup> DL 7.139 (τὸν ὅλον κόσμον ζῶον ὄντα καὶ ἐμψυχον καὶ λογικόν) – as asserted by Chrysippus in *On Providence* Book 1, Apollodorus in his *Natural Philosophy*, and Posidonius: see Furley 2008, 449–450. On the significance of the term *empsychos* for the visual arts (particularly attitudes to the illusionistic potential of naturalism), see Squire 2010.

<sup>23</sup> On the ‘fitness’ of the Stoic cosmos, see Furley 2008, 436.

<sup>24</sup> On the Stoic concept of *pneuma*, see Sedley 2005, 384–391, 402–405; and Sellars 2006, 86–104.

*Natural History* is an avowedly materialist project, with a pronounced Stoic inflection.<sup>25</sup> As I shall demonstrate, the ontological underpinnings of the *Natural History* entail an approach to *kosmos* that has important implications for Pliny's understanding of the visual arts. Focusing on his account of painting in Book 35, we shall see that seemingly 'parergonal' features of Pliny's art history actually embody broader structuring patterns that emerge repeatedly within the text, informed by the workings of rational *natura* itself. Second, I turn from the *Natural History* to a decorative scheme contemporary with Pliny's text – the House of the Gilded Cupids (*Casa degli Amorini Dorati*) in Pompeii. Although I do not advance a specifically 'Stoic' reading of this house, I suggest that it nevertheless demonstrates a parallel interest in ornament's capacity to reveal continuities within and between the *physis* of natural materials and human practices of imitation and adornment.<sup>26</sup> Both the *Natural History* and the House of the Gilded Cupids, I propose, exhibit an interest in *natura* as inventoried assemblage and generative, replicative force, demonstrating (in Mary Beagon's phrase) a 'terrestrial curiosity' which grounds the cosm(et)ic within the organising impulses of matter.<sup>27</sup>

## Pliny's *parerga*

*Namque et Graeci nomine ornamenti appellavere eum et nos a perfecta absolutaque elegantia mundum. caelum quidem haud dubie caelati argumento diximus.*

The Greeks have designated the world by a word that means 'ornament', and we have given it the name of *mundus*, because of its perfect finish and grace. The sky [*caelum*] we named such without doubt because of metal-chasing [*caelatum*].<sup>28</sup>

Following the 'table of contents' that comprises the first book of the *Natural History* (thereby revealing the structural principles of the work itself), Pliny introduces his account of the universe with a reference to the term *ornamentum*, relating it to the

<sup>25</sup> On Pliny's 'encyclopaedic' (as opposed to scientific) approach, see Lloyd 1983 and Conte 1994, 67–104; on the problematic status of the *Natural History* as an 'encyclopaedia', see Doody 2009 and 2010, 11–39. On the *Natural History* as 'an epitome of the culture of the first century', see Beagon 1992 (quotation from 15); on the Stoic underpinnings of Pliny's cosmology (within the context of a broader 'layman's' eclecticism), see Beagon 1992, 26–50 (where she stresses 'the difference between the exponent of Stoic philosophy and Pliny the writer with Stoic beliefs', 30) and Tanner 2006, 236–237.

<sup>26</sup> Though reading through the lens of a specific philosophical school would not be an unprecedented approach to Roman domestic assemblages: see, for example, Warden and Romano 1994 (an Epicurean interpretation of the sculptures from the Villa dei Papiri in Herculaneum).

<sup>27</sup> Beagon 2011, 77 (contrasting Pliny's approach to the 'celestial' or philosophical curiosity of intellectuals such as Manilius or Seneca).

<sup>28</sup> *NH* 2.8.

Latin *mundus*, as equivalent to the Greek *kosmos*.<sup>29</sup> In naming the world, he points out, we look to principles of both order and refinement, so testifying (as Katharina Volk explains) to ‘an inherent understanding that that which is orderly is also beautiful and decorative, and vice versa’, like ‘an artefact devised by a rational being, extremely well designed’.<sup>30</sup> Indeed the sky itself, the *caelus*, can be understood as a finely wrought object, its name deriving from the term for repoussé or chased metalwork, *caelatura* (the equivalent of the Greek *toreutikê*). The patterns traced by the heavens, in other words, are akin to relief forms impressed into gold, silver or bronze, glistening in the bowl of the firmament.<sup>31</sup> While the idea of the *kosmos* as carefully designed artefact has a long cosmological pedigree (not least in Plato’s *Timaeus*), Pliny’s reference to the art of *caelatura* here has an added force.<sup>32</sup> Not only does it suggest a principle of teleological design, but it also draws attention to techniques and materials of metalwork, which will receive extensive treatment later in the *Natural History*, in Book 33.<sup>33</sup> Here at the outset, then, we find an explicit, even programmatic, correlation being drawn between cosmos, ornament, artistic process and material artefact. Moreover, we are explicitly invited to reflect on the historical and etymological processes through which this relationship has been elucidated, as the Greeks and their Roman successors have sought through empirical observation to survey, explain and illustrate the rational operations of *natura*. As Chrysippus (cited by Cicero) had claimed: ‘Man himself comes to be in order to contemplate and imitate the world (*homo ortus est ad mundum contemplandum et imitandum*)’; that is, Man is both part of the rational, material cosmos and able to observe, reflect upon and emulate its nature.<sup>34</sup>

By reputation, the *Natural History* is something of a byword for superfluity, a ragbag of elements in which anecdotes sit cheek-by-jowl with random observations culled from diverse sources.<sup>35</sup> Read according to a rationalising, materialist cosmol-

<sup>29</sup> On the table of contents, or *summarium*, of the *Natural History*, see most recently Naas 2002, 171–195; Riggsby 2007; Doody 2010, 92–131; Morello 2011; Gibson 2011, 189–193; and Squire 2011, 7, 272.

<sup>30</sup> Volk 2009, 18–20. On the etymology of *mundus* (as meaning ‘clean’ or ‘refined’, ‘adornment’, ‘the universe’, or a form of sacred pit), see von Kamptz 1936–1966; Puhvel 1976, 163–167; and Le Boeuffe 1987. Pliny names his source here as Varro, who observes at *Sat. Men.* 420 that ‘the sky [*caelum*] is called thus because of engraving [*caelatum*]; in Greek it is called *kosmos* because of its adornment, in Latin it is called *mundus* because of its purity’ (*appellatur a caelatura caelum, Graece ab ornatu κόσμος, Latine a puritia mundus*).

<sup>31</sup> On the cosmic significance of gold in antiquity, and its use in ceiling design in particular, see O’Sullivan 2015.

<sup>32</sup> On the role of the craftsman Demiurge in Plato’s *Timaeus*, see most recently Broadie 2011 (with further bibliography) and Kjeller Johansen 2014. On the aesthetics of the crafted cosmos in relation to ancient music, see Hicks 2017.

<sup>33</sup> See especially *NH* 33.139–157, with analysis by Isager 1991, 56–79. On the technique of *caelatura*, the classic study remains Strong 1966; see also Lapatin 2015, 19–44.

<sup>34</sup> Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.37–39.

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, Conte 1994, 67–104 (discussed below).



ogy, however (especially one infused with the spirit of Roman *imperium*), the sheer volume and detail of Pliny's terrestrial explorations suggest a desire to catalogue and explain the *logos* of nature, in all its wondrous and seemingly perplexing diversity. Jeremy Tanner and others have observed how a Stoic sense of the inherent rationality and order of the cosmos infuses Pliny's account of the history of art in Books 34–37.<sup>36</sup> This is particularly apparent in the degree to which the *telos* of naturalistic representation drives his account of the development of painting and sculpture, whereby artists are presented as a series of 'discoverers' (rather than inventors) of the laws of *natura*.<sup>37</sup> Yet this drive towards illusionistic *mimêsis* is only one component of a far richer, more complex approach to the visual arts – one which is integrated, as we must repeatedly remind ourselves, within a totalising work of natural science predominantly focused upon the nature and organisation of *matter*. Embedded within the *Natural History*, we find, are repeated allusions to seemingly 'parergonal' features of both art and nature, which turn out to be anything but supervenient upon the organising structures of the whole.

Within Pliny's serial chronologies of *inventio* within specific classes of materials, for example, he pays particular attention to so-called 'lesser' genres in the visual arts. In Book 35, on painting, this includes the category of *minores picturae*, and specifically *rhyparographia*, the 'painting of sordid subjects' (more commonly known to us as 'still life'). As Pliny observes, this seemingly 'humble' (*humilia*) genre nevertheless reached the 'pinnacle of glory' (*summam ... gloriam*) in the work of the painter Piraeicus, fetching some of the highest prices on the art market.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, 'oddities' such as unfinished paintings turn out to be one of the most treasured classes of art object, 'more admired than those that were finished' (*in maiore admiratione esse quam perfecta*) because of their capacity to reveal the artist's 'very thoughts' (*ipsae cogitationes*) in their remaining lines.<sup>39</sup>

While these examples do not address the concept of 'ornament', they nevertheless demonstrate an interest in subverting conventional hierarchies of genre, together with the notion that the seemingly tangential and overlooked can often be the most revealing. This notion finds compelling illustration in Pliny's treatment of Pheidias' great chryselephantine statue of Athena Parthenos in Book 36. Rather than giving a full treatment of this most awe-inspiring of Classical masterpieces, Pliny chooses to convey the statue's beauty and magnitude by way of its most 'parergonal' features – the decoration of her shield and sandals. Indeed, it is through such subsidiary, 'small pieces of evidence' (*argumenta parva*) that, he claims, Pheidias' artistic genius is most

<sup>36</sup> Tanner 2006, 235–246; see also Isager 1991.

<sup>37</sup> On *inventiones* as 'discoveries' rather than 'inventions', see Tanner 2006, 239.

<sup>38</sup> NH 35.112. On *rhyparographia*, see Squire 2017, 208–210, with further bibliography.

<sup>39</sup> NH 35.145. On *tabulae imperfectae* in the *Natural History* (which turn out to play a climactic role in Pliny's account of the materiality and ontology of painting itself), see Platt forthcoming b.

clearly revealed, ‘so truly did every detail lend itself to his art (*adeo momenta omnia capacia artis illi fuere*)’.<sup>40</sup> Significantly, these particular components of the statue are ‘chased’ in relief (*caelavit ... caelatum*), just as the heavens themselves are ‘chased’ upon the dome of the sky at the very beginning of Book 2: it is in their ‘fitness’ to the whole (*capacia*) that the ornamental features of Pheidias’ art demonstrate a finely wrought order that both echoes and expresses the ‘perfect finish and grace’ (the *perfecta absolutaque elegantia*) of the *mundus* itself (2.8).

While the technology of metal-chasing suggests an underlying logic between *kosmos* as ornament and the ornamental features of celebrated cult statues, Pliny’s comments on the Athena Parthenos also parallel a less exalted feature of *natura* – the contemptible world of insects, which he discusses in Book 11. Here, he goes out of his way to draw attention to the minuscule, the overlooked and the despised:<sup>41</sup>

*Sed turrigeros elephantorum miramur umeros taurorumque colle et truces in sublime iactus, tigrium rapinas, leonum iugas, cum rerum natura nusquam magis quam in minimis tota sit. quapropter quaeso ne nostra legentes, quoniam ex his spernunt multa, etiam relata fastidio damnent, cum in contemplatione naturae nihil possit videri supervacuum.*

But we marvel at elephants’ shoulders carrying castles, and bulls’ necks and the fierce tossing of their heads, at the rapacity of tigers and the manes of lions, whereas really Nature is to be found in her entirety nowhere more than in the tiniest of her creations. I consequently beg my readers not to let their contempt for many of these creatures lead them also to condemn to scorn what I relate about them, since in the contemplation of Nature nothing can possibly be deemed superfluous.

Just as the sandals of the Parthenos reveal more about Pheidias’ artistic skill than an analysis of the entire colossus, so the wonders of *natura* can be experienced more powerfully in the distilled complexities of her smallest creations (*in minimis*), rather than the strength and ferocity of elephants, bulls or big cats. Nothing in nature, Pliny claims, can be regarded as *supervacuum* (‘superfluous’, or ‘redundant’): that is, nothing should be deemed ‘parergonal’ to the wondrous workings of the *mundus*, because every component is metonymic of the ingenious *ratio* of the whole.

<sup>40</sup> *NH* 36.18–19. On the shield and sandals of the Athena Parthenos, see Lapatin 2001, 66–7, with *DNO*, nos. 889–933. Of course, the decorative scheme of these more ‘parergonal’ features of the interior statue (that is, the Centauromachy on her sandals and the Amazonomachy and Gigantomachy on her shield) both echoes and points us back to the more prominent decorative scheme of the Doric metopes on the Parthenon’s exterior.

<sup>41</sup> *NH* 11.2–4. On the influence of Aristotelian empiricism (especially his justification for studying ‘lesser’ animals at *PA* 1.5 645a18) behind Pliny’s comments on animals here and in Books 7–11 of the *NH* more generally, see Bodson 1986 and 1998, 70–71; Healy 1999, 70–72; and Beagon 2005, 40–42. On the fitting of war elephants with ‘turrets’, see Charles 2008.

That this applies to mineral matter as much as it does to tiny insects is suggested by the opening of the *Natural History*'s final book, on precious stones:<sup>42</sup>

*Ut nihil instituto operi desit, gemmae supersunt in artum coacta rerum naturae maiestas, multis nulla parte mirabilior. tantum tribuunt varietati, coloribus, materiae, decori, violare etiam signis, quae causa gemmarum est, quasdam nefas ducentes, aliquas vero extra pretia ulla taxationemque humanarum opum arbitantes, ut plerisque ad summam absolutamque naturae rerum contemplationem satis sit una aliqua gemma.*

That nothing may be lacking from the work I have undertaken, it remains for me to speak of gems, in which the majesty of nature is concentrated and, in the opinion of many, nowhere displayed more admirably. Such great value do men attach to their variety, colours, material substance and beauty, that they think it a crime to violate certain kinds by engraving them as seals, even though this is the prime reason for using gems. Others are considered to be beyond all price and estimation in terms of human wealth, so that for many people a single gem is enough to provide them with a supreme and perfect contemplation of the work of nature.

Here, Pliny writes within a tradition that looks back at least as far as Posidippus' *Lithika*, in which the microscopic dimensions of gems are celebrated for their paradoxically macroscopic significance.<sup>43</sup> It is not necessarily for their economic value (which defies calculation) that gems are so admired, nor for their glyptic artistry (which facilitates their function as intaglios, but can detract from the wondrous nature of the stones themselves); rather, it is their powerful concentration of the *maiestas* (the 'majesty') of *natura* within pure matter, so much so that a single gem can itself generate a 'supreme and perfect' experience of her work.<sup>44</sup> Such *summa absoluteque contemplatio* echoes precisely the notion of the *mundus* itself as *perfecta absoluteque elegantia* at the beginning of Book 2. Here, in the final book of the *Natural History*, we find a miniaturisation of the universe within a single stone: the *kosmos* as both world-order and aesthetic delight has truly come full-circle. As in Book 11, the *mundus* is revealed to work according to a fractal logic, whereby the miraculous *artificio* ('ingenuity') and *ratio* ('rational method') that infuse the whole are equally at work within the ignominious bodies of insects or the most highly prized inorganic materials. It is not just the case, Pliny suggests, that within the *Natural History* the tiny, the partial and the ornamental are not *supervacuum* ('redundant'); rather, these components embody and exemplify the very qualities of reason and ingenuity that the reader herself is invited to contemplate and emulate.

With this fractal logic in mind, we might look afresh at Pliny's account, in Book 35, of the fourth-century BC painter Protogenes of Rhodes, an artist infamous, he tells

<sup>42</sup> NH 37.1.

<sup>43</sup> See, from a vast bibliography, Hunter 2004, Kuttner 2005 and Elsner 2014.

<sup>44</sup> cf. NH 33.22–23, on the relationship between *ars* and *materia* in the engraving and valuation of seal-rings.

us, for his obsessive treatment of minor details.<sup>45</sup> Although he is presented as ‘parergonal’ to painting’s ultimate genius, Apelles, Protogenes emerges as the reluctant hero of the *Natural History*, an avatar of the author himself, whose very name (‘first born’) suggests a primacy that is belied by his own capacity for self-effacement.<sup>46</sup> The episodes that feature Protogenes might be understood as paradigmatic explorations of the limits of the object – in terms of artistic technique, human perception, mimetic potential and corporeality. And notably it is here that we encounter a particularly telling, *pre*-Kantian application of the Greek term *parergon* to the visual art of antiquity.

In line with his paradoxical status as both highly skilled painter and unassuming labourer, Protogenes encompasses the roles of both artistic genius and humble craftsman: until the age of fifty, Pliny tells us, Protogenes also painted ships (*naves pinxisse*).<sup>47</sup> This is ‘proved’ (*argumentum*), Pliny continues, by his addition to a painting of the Athenian sacred triremes Paralus and Hammonias of ‘small long ships which painters call *parerga*’ (*parvolas naves longas ... quae pictores parergia appellant*). Although for Kant the term *parergon* would later come to serve for the category of the redundant and ornamental, Pliny’s use suggests a purely formal sense: that is, the ships were quite literally placed as ‘side-pieces’ next to the painting’s central figures (which were probably personified as a sailor and young woman), perhaps as flanking pendants.<sup>48</sup> Yet while for modern readers the ships’ size and placement immediately assign them to the category of the ‘ornamental’, we must be careful not to align this with a notion of lesser significance or value. For Pliny, Protogenes’ ships are to be read as an allusion

<sup>45</sup> e.g. *NH* 35.101 (Protogenes is so ‘extremely devoted to his art’ that he is ‘consequently not very productive’) and 35.101 (discussed below). On the role of Protogenes in the *Natural History*, see Carey 2003, 102–104, together with the commentary in Croisille 1985, 212–217. For sources on Protogenes, see *DNO*, nos. 2993–3032. For more on Protogenes as the unlikely protagonist of Pliny’s history of painting, see Platt forthcoming a.

<sup>46</sup> On the relationship between Apelles and Protogenes, see *NH* 35.81–83 (the anecdote of the ‘lines’) and 87–88 (on Apelles’ purchase of Protogenes’ paintings in order to raise their value). On the painting of the ‘lines’, see Van der Waal 1967; Gombrich 1976, 3–18; Elkins 1995 (with further bibliography); and Platt forthcoming a.

<sup>47</sup> *NH* 35.101: *quidam et naves pinxisse usque ad quinquagensimum annum; argumentum esse, quod cum Athenis celeberrimo loco Minervae delubri propylon pingeret, ubi fecit nobilem Paralum et Hammoniada, quam quidam Nausicaan uocant, adiecerit parvolas naves longas in iis, quae pictores parergia appellant, ut appareret, a quibus initiis ad arcem ostentationis opera sua pervenissent.*

<sup>48</sup> On this passage, see *DNO*, nos. 3016–3017 (s.v. ‘Protogenes’, no. 5), with Wood 1993, 61; Stoichita 1997, 23–24; Bokody 2015, 12; and Platt and Squire 2017, 46. On Kant’s use of the *parergon*, see above, n. 3. On pendants in Roman art (which may have influenced Pliny’s argument here), see Bartman 1988 and Valladares 2014. Croisille (1985, 213) surveys the various interpretations of Protogenes’ early career (did he paint images *onto* ships themselves, paint images *of* ships, or even paint votive dedications in the *form* of ships?), but comes down firmly on the side of the first interpretation: ‘Protogène a voulu simplement rappeler, en représentant des navires, qu’il a commencé sa carrière en peignant *sur les navires*’ (his italics).

to his former vocation as a ship-painter, ‘to show from what beginnings his art had attained to the pinnacle of display (*a quibus initiis ad arcem ostentationis*)’ – that is, the *pinacotheca* in the Propylaea to the Acropolis, the *arx* of Athens itself.<sup>49</sup>

Rather than occupying an inferior position within a preordained aesthetic hierarchy, then, Protogenes’ *parergia* serve as a useful interpretative device which, in Pliny’s biographical account, links the painter’s masterful treatment of his subject matter to his training. As a former ship-painter, Protogenes is an artist who (counter to Socrates’ critique of *mimêsis* in Plato’s *Republic*) has true knowledge of his subject matter.<sup>50</sup> His naval *parergia* do not just serve to adorn or even to identify the painting’s personifications; they also make visible the deep comprehension of their material referents that informs Protogenes’ act of figuration. Like the Stoic sage, Protogenes is a painter who both contemplates and imitates the workings of the physical world. And like the realm of the insects, his smaller *parergia* do not simply play in a minor key, but validate and exemplify the *ratio* that informs the whole. In this way, Protogenes’ *parvulae naves* elevate his painting to the status of an honorific *ornamentum* to the state of Athens. They also, incidentally, comment on the foundational importance (otherwise seldom acknowledged in public art) of the Athenian navy to the project of the Periclean Acropolis: after all, during the Classical period those ‘long ships’ and the sailors who manned them had been far from ornamental.<sup>51</sup>

Protogenes is thus an artist whose *artificio* and *ratio* (‘ingenuity’ and ‘rational method’) reveal themselves in oblique, unexpected, even ‘parergonal’ ways. Such is his ‘force of spirit and artistic capriciousness’ (*impetus animi et ... artis libido*), Pliny tells us, that when ‘Aristotle used to advise him to paint the achievements of Alexander the Great, as belonging to history for all time’, he instead painted a portrait of Aristotle’s mother, Phaestis – his ‘material cause’, as it were.<sup>52</sup> While other painters demonstrate their ability to contemplate and emulate the workings of *natura* by means of conventional illusionistic *mimêsis* (such as Zeuxis’ grapes or Apelles’

49 On the Classical Greek paintings in the Propylaea’s *pinacotheca*, see Paus. 1.22.6–7 – where Pausanias identifies works by Polygnotus.

50 Plat. *Rep.* 598b–c: ‘As for example a painter, we say, will paint us a cobbler, a carpenter, and other craftsmen, though he himself has no expertise in any of these arts’ (οἷον ὁ ζωγράφος, φαμέν, ζωγραφῆσει ἡμῖν σκυτοτόμον, τέκτονα, τοὺς ἄλλους δημιουργοὺς, περὶ οὐδενὸς τούτων ἐπαίων τῶν τεχνῶν). For Pliny’s own comments on the invention of the *longa navis*, see *NH* 7.207–208.

51 I am grateful to Richard Neer for this point, on which see Hanson 1996 and Neer 2002, 162–164. On the democratic significance of the Athenian navy, see e.g. [Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 1.1–2. On its artistic and literary representation (which may have been more nuanced than scholars have traditionally assumed), see Butera 2010.

52 35.106 (*fecit et ... matrem Aristotelis philosophi, qui ei suadebat, ut Alexandri Magni opera pingeret propter aeternitatem rerum*). In *Arist. Ph.* 2.3 (194b 23–35), Aristotle explicitly refers to the father as the ‘efficient cause’ of the child. On the gender implications of this analysis (by which the mother as ‘material cause’ supplies the matter for generation rather than its agency or form), see Sharkey 2016, 81–111.

horse), the natural *logos* infusing Protogenes' work is revealed by alternative strategies, gesturing towards modes of image-making and ontologies of representation that make us re-think the relationship between artist and *mundus*.<sup>53</sup> In doing so, they also complicate any straightforward notion of 'ornament'.

In particular, Protogenes is best known for an anecdote that, in its contemplation of the relationship between *ars* and *natura*, also pokes at the fault line between figure and abstraction, form and matter, surface and structure, random chance and providential order. Happily, it also brings us back to the physical structure of foam, and the ornamental 'envelope' of the Beijing Water Cube with which we began (Fig. 9.1):<sup>54</sup>

*Est in ea canis mire factus, ut quem pariter ars et casus pinxerit. non iudicabat se in eo exprimere spumam anhelantis, cum in reliqua parte omni, quod difficillimum erat, sibi ipse satisfacisset. displicebat autem ars ipsa: nec minui poterat et videbatur nimia ac longius a veritate discedere, spumaque pingi, non ex ore nasci. anxio animi cruciatu, cum in pictura verum esse, non verisimile vellet, absterserat saepius mutaveratque penicillum, nullo modo sibi adprobans. postremo iratus arti, quod intellegeretur, spongeam inpegit in viso loco tabulae. et illa reposuit ablatis colores qualiter cura optaverat, fecitque in pictura fortuna naturam.*

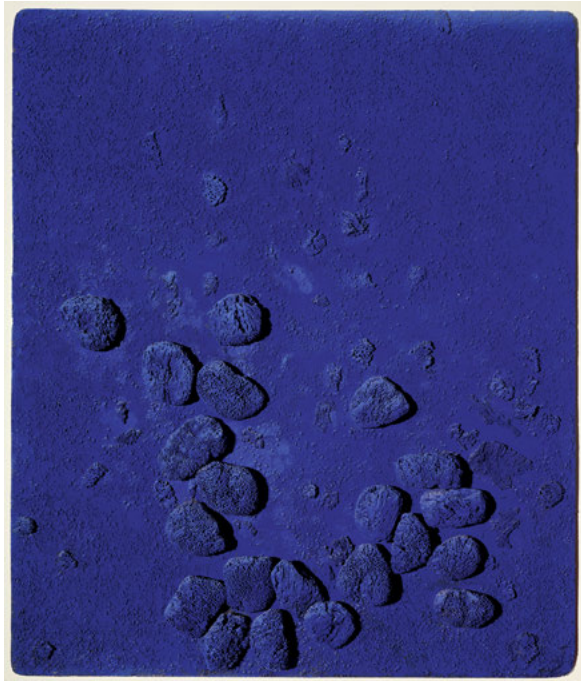
In the picture [of Ialysus] there is a dog marvellously executed, so as to appear to have been painted by art and good fortune jointly: the artist's own opinion was that he did not fully show in it the foam of the panting dog, although in all the remaining details he had satisfied himself, which was very difficult. But the actual art displayed displeased him, nor was he able to diminish it, and he thought it was excessive and departed too far from the reality – the foam appeared to be painted, not to be the natural product of the animal's mouth; vexed and tormented, as he wanted his picture to contain the truth and not merely a near-truth, he had several times rubbed off the paint and used another brush, quite unable to satisfy himself. Finally he fell into a rage with his art because it was perceptible, and dashed a sponge against the offending spot in the picture. And the sponge restored the colours he had removed, just as his diligence had desired, and chance produced nature in the picture!

Could there be any material substance more 'parergonal' to the work of painting than the humble sponge? As a tool primarily employed for erasing rather than applying pigments, or for cleaning the surfaces of panels, frescoes and papyrus (as Martial reminds us),<sup>55</sup> the sponge also forms part of an arsenal of painterly devices for the creation of subsidiary 'patterning' effects in *trompe l'œil* murals and stage scenery. In a technique now known as *schleppitchka*, sponges are applied alongside feathers, leaves and other natural objects in the depiction of organic materials and the grain-

<sup>53</sup> NH 35.65–66, 95. On the relationship between *natura* and *mimēsis* in these anecdotes (and their Stoic significance), see Tanner 2006, 235–246.

<sup>54</sup> NH 35.102–103. On sources for Protogenes' *Ialysus*, see DNO, nos. 3003–3010 (s.v. 'Protogenes', no. 1), with Falaschi forthcoming.

<sup>55</sup> Mart. 4.10.6 (erasing writing from a papyrus).



**Fig. 9.2:** Yves Klein, *Relief éponge bleu*, 1958. Wallraf-Richartz-Museum – Fondation Corboud, Cologne.

ing of stone and marble.<sup>56</sup> Yet in Protogenes' masterpiece (protected by Demetrius Poliorcetes during the Siege of Rhodes and later dedicated in the *Templum Pacis* in Rome), the sponge plays an essential causal role: the artist's supreme act of painterly depiction is generated not by human skill but by a serendipitous impression, in a manner that satisfies the quirky Protogenes, yet warns against the hubristic assumptions that drive human feats of *mimêsis*. Centuries before Yves Klein's *reliefs-éponges*, the sponge's 'raw living matter' proves to be the purest vehicle for paint as a medium, offering an alternative model of (quite literal) absorption to the bewitching powers of naturalistic illusionism (Fig. 9.2).<sup>57</sup> The most precise imitator of the natural world, it turns out, is *natura* herself.

This should not be at all surprising for readers of the *Natural History* who have attended to Pliny's comments in Books 9 and 31 on the nature of sponges (including his observation that some of the best quality sponges come, like Protogenes, from Rhodes).<sup>58</sup> Protogenes may have objected to the fact that human *ars* 'could be dis-

<sup>56</sup> See Crabtree and Beudert 2012, 300–303.

<sup>57</sup> Yves Klein, quoted in Rosenthal 1982, 111.

<sup>58</sup> *NH* 31.131: 'Medical men, in their ignorance, comprehend all sponges under two names; African sponge, the substance of which is tougher and firmer, and Rhodian sponge, which is softer and better adapted for fomentations' (*medici inscitia ad duo nomina eas rede gere, Africanas, quarum firmitus sit robur, Rhodiasque ad fovendum molliores*). In general on sponges, see *NH* 9.148–150 and 31.123–131.

cerned' in his painting (*intellegeretur*), but as Pliny tells us in Book 9, sponges are themselves 'discerning' (*intellectum inesse*): as living beings that engage dynamically with their environment they occupy an interstitial category between plant and animal.<sup>59</sup> Strikingly, this perceptual ability is demonstrated, for Pliny, by the fact that 'they regulate their movements by the sense of hearing, and at the slightest noise they contract themselves, and emit an abundant moisture'.<sup>60</sup> The sponge's apprehension of Protogenes' rage, in other words, is what generates the release of pigment that enables its foam-like imprint. Impressed on the surface of the painting, the abstract (one might say 'ornamental') textural effect created by the sponge's holes thus gives form to the most convincing mode of figuration – one which operates as an instantiation as well as a representation of its liquid matter. Protogenes' painting does not *deceive* an animal (as Zeuxis' grapes deceive the birds); rather, it is *produced* by a being that fulfills only the most minimum requirements of animal life.<sup>61</sup>

Pliny's final comment here – *fecitque in pictura fortuna naturam* – raises complex questions about causality. On one hand, the visual effect is merely the result of random 'chance', a pleasing paradox that results from a tempestuous artist's fit of pique. On the other hand, it demonstrates the deeper, and more consistent, workings of 'Providence', as well as the material nature of causes.<sup>62</sup> First, the artist's frustration produces within him a doglike rage (he is *iratus*) that is given visible form in the rabid foam produced by the sponge's impression (we might note that in Book 31, Pliny claims that sponges are particularly helpful for applying salves to 'bites inflicted by dogs').<sup>63</sup> Second, the sponge's ability to replicate the visible structure of foam testifies to an underlying logic of form that is consistent across the natural world: indeed, Pliny comments that the softest, whitest sponges 'have been steeped the whole summer through with the foam of the sea (*salis spuma*)'.<sup>64</sup> Likewise, in Book 13, he observes in relation to the manufacture of papyrus that strips soaked with too

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59 NH 9.148: 'It would appear that these creatures have some intelligence, for as soon as ever they feel the hand about to tear them off, they contract themselves, and are separated with much greater difficulty; they do the same also when the waves buffet them to and fro' (*intellectum inesse iis apparet, quia, ubi avulsorem sensere, contractae multo difficilius abstrahuntur; hoc idem fluctu pulsante faciunt*).

60 NH 31.124 (*aliqui narrant et auditu regi eas contrahique ad sonum, exprimentes abundantiam umoris*).

61 On the role of animals as both ideal and naïve viewers in the *Natural History* (and western art-historical tradition), see Mitchell 1994, 329–344.

62 For overviews of Stoic notions of causality, see Botros 1985; Bobzien 2004; and Meyer 2009.

63 NH 31.129: 'To bites inflicted by dogs, it is a good plan to apply sponge, from time to time, cut fine, and moistened with vinegar, cold water, or honey' (*ad canum morsus utiliter concisae imponuntur ex aceto aut frigida aut melle, abunde subinde umectandae*).

64 NH 31.123: 'Sponges are made white artificially; the softest being chosen for the purpose, and after they have been steeped the whole summer through with the foam of the sea' (*candidae cura fiunt: e mollissimis recentes per aestatem tinctae salis spuma*).



much Nile water during preparation are apt to become 'spongy' (*fungus*, derived from *sphongos*) and absorb ink too readily.<sup>65</sup> Though he could not know about Weaire-Phelan structures, or the concept of fractals, the parallels Pliny draws between sponge and foam testify to an interest in the randomly regular replicative structures of matter – a cosmic order that makes itself perceptible in the most 'mundane' or 'cosmetic' of contexts.

Protopogenes' sponge offers, I suggest, an alternative ontology of the image to that of *mimêsis* (or imitation) – a model of 'truth' (*verum*) rather than 'truthlikeness' (*verisimile*), which draws upon the Stoic notion of *typôsis* (or knowledge acquired through sense-impressions) in order to bypass Platonic concerns about the deceptive illusionism of representation (and indeed, of matter itself).<sup>66</sup> In Protopogenes' workshop, painting is not presented as a second-order imitation of reality, but as contiguous and continuous with it. The artist thus plays the role not of transformative genius or cunning copyist, but of nature's (unwitting) agent, in the 'natural' production of an entirely 'natural' image. That the tale provided a *topos* for thinking through epistemological dilemmas is suggested by its later appearance in the work of Sextus Empiricus, who uses a version featuring Apelles and a horse to illustrate the advantages for the Sceptic of suspending judgment about the truth-value of sense-impressions (*phantasiai*).<sup>67</sup>

Here it is worth observing that, for Gian Biagio Conte, Pliny's treatment of sponges in Book 9 is in fact programmatic of the larger structural and taxonomic issues at work within the *Natural History*: as a being of indeterminate nature between animals and plants, the sponge forms 'a link between two worlds and two forms of life', participating, Pliny claims 'in a third nature common to both kingdoms'.<sup>68</sup> As such, it contains within itself 'a secret project of the organization of life', a residual, frugal trace of the *scala naturae* developed by Aristotle.<sup>69</sup> For Conte, such taxonomic ambiguity rather points to Pliny's unscientific interest in the particular, his archivist's commitment to the 'hoarding of data' rather than a more rigorous model of classification. Such 'implicit organicity, concealed within the form of the discourse' thus testifies

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<sup>65</sup> *NH* 13.81.

<sup>66</sup> For further discussion of Protopogenes' sponge in relation to the ontology of the impression and notions of indexicality, see Platt forthcoming a.

<sup>67</sup> *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* 1.28. On this passage, see Sedley 2003, 180–181: 'Likewise, the Sceptic is someone who, in the interests of attaining tranquility, started by trying to resolve all the philosophical disputes that disquieted him; but it was only when he gave up in despair and decided to suspend judgement that he discovered, to his surprise, that he had thereby inadvertently attained his goal, peace of mind.' On the implications of both anecdotes for the aesthetics of ancient painting, see Bussels 2012, 27–29, and Thein 2016, 311–313.

<sup>68</sup> *NH* 9.146 (*neque animalium neque fruticum, sed tertiam quandam ex utroque naturam habent*); see Conte 1994, 102.

<sup>69</sup> Conte 1994, 102–103.

to Pliny's lack of a theoretical centre or unifying principle.<sup>70</sup> The structure of the *Natural History* is a sore subject for Plinians, continually up for debate: are there 36 or 37 books? Is it linear, arboreal or annular? A mirror of the world or a utilitarian model of nature designed purely for Roman man?<sup>71</sup> But it is in this very organicity, I would argue, that the 'natural' structures of Pliny's *natura* are gradually or randomly revealed, in a subtle but nevertheless programmatic interplay between providence and chance, as the reader charts her own path through the work. Within the context of the *Natural History* the sponge's impression thus attests to the unity, coherence and rationality of the Stoic *mundus*, even at its most quixotic, frivolous or unpredictable.

## The House of the Gilded Cupids

How, then, might this ontological reorientation play out within the workings of matter itself? And how does it intersect with practices of 'ornament'? In this final section, I look to interior decorative schemes that, like Pliny's *Natural History*, demonstrate an interest in 'randomly replicative structures of matter' as they play out across different artistic media, paying special attention to the shifting relationship between figure and ornament that we find in the House of the Gilded Cupids in Pompeii. But first, we might note that nature's spontaneous figurations within art's raw materials repeatedly emerge from the content of the *Natural History*. While the sponge embodies *natura*'s reproductive and representational potential for painting in Book 35, Book 36 (on stones) mentions an 'extraordinary tradition' relating to a marble quarry on Paros: here, 'when the stone-breakers split a single block with their wedges, a likeness of Silenus was found inside'.<sup>72</sup> Likewise, Book 37 (on gems) tells us of an agate belonging to Pyrrhus of Epirus 'in which might be seen the Nine Muses and Apollo playing his cithara, not due to any artistic intention, but to nature unaided (*non arte, sed naturae sponte*)'.<sup>73</sup>

The fantasy of these naturally occurring *acheiropoëtoi* (figures not made by human hands) also seems to have inspired interior decorative practices, in which fig-

<sup>70</sup> Conte 1994, 103.

<sup>71</sup> See Laehn 2013, 6–31, for a summary of interpretations, together with the theory that the *Natural History* has a ring-like, 'annular' structure. On the role of Pliny's *summarium* (and the question of whether it should count as 'Book 1'), see above, n. 29.

<sup>72</sup> NH 36.14 (*sed in Pariorum mirabile proditur, glæba lapidis unius cuneis dividendum soluta, imaginem Sileni intus extitisse*).

<sup>73</sup> NH 37.5: '[Pyrrhus] is said to have possessed an agate on which could be seen the Nine Muses with Apollo holding his lyre. This due not to any artistic intention, but to nature unaided; and the markings spread in such a way that even the individual Muses had their appropriate emblems allotted to them' (*namque habuisse dicitur achaten, in qua novem Musae et Apollo citharam tenens spectarentur, non arte, sed naturae sponte ita discurrentibus maculis ut Musis quoque singulis sua redderentur insignia*).

uration repeatedly emerges amidst the *trompe l'œil* veining of faux-marble revetments. Fabio Barry has gathered together a fascinating set of examples (many of them now sadly lost or poorly preserved): these range from Hellenistic tombs and palaces to First Style architectural features and Fourth Style frescoes in Pompeii.<sup>74</sup> Some purport to be 'plausible' modes of figuration, such as the molluscs that appear within the *trompe l'œil* alabaster in the vestibule of the House of the Faun (as if natural marine 'fossils' suspended within the rock (Fig. 9.3)).<sup>75</sup> Others are more miraculous, such as the gazelles that graze within the faux-marble of a third-century BC Alexandrian tomb (Fig. 9.4), or the bird that might just plausibly sing from within the painted marble veining that adorns the Alexander exedra of the House of the Faun (Fig. 9.5).<sup>76</sup> Indeed, another stuccoed block on the same wall erupts with a monochrome scene of reveling centaurs (Fig. 9.6).<sup>77</sup> Are we supposed to be looking at a *trompe l'œil* relief here? Or something more like Pyrrhus' agate, in which the markings of the marble both interact with and possibly even generate the figural scene? It is telling that the subjects favoured by such 'spontaneous' figurations are either the products of nature herself (gazelles, birds), or hybrid figures (satyrs, centaurs), whose straddling of animal and human life suggests a wondrous fusion of natural impulse and self-conscious artifice. Marble, it is implied, is both raw natural material and a generative, replicative force.

In the House of the Faun, these devices complement a cornucopia of spectacular mosaics that are themselves a miraculous form of 'painting in stone', thereby generating a delightful *paragone* between different replicative media.<sup>78</sup> In the Alexander exedra in particular, we are thus presented with a stone 'painting' (of a 'real' painting) framed by paintings of 'stones' (which spontaneously produces 'paintings' of their own).<sup>79</sup> This pulls the decorative scheme together, creating an appropriate sense of

<sup>74</sup> Barry 2011, 94–99 and Barry 2017, 30–32; see also McAlpine 2014. For parallel examples in the mediaeval Islamic tradition (where 'natural' images within marble 'authorized figuration within an otherwise aniconic environment'), see Flood 2016, who relates this tradition to the 'natural ornament' generated through marble veneers employed by modernist architects such as Adolf Loos.

<sup>75</sup> See de Vos 1977, 34–36, figs. 26–28, 30 (who suggests that the painted alabaster is meant to simulate a type from Uadi Mousal) and Barry 2011, 98. Laidlaw (1985, 33, n. 28) also refers to an unpublished 'marine' marble panel from the excavations at Pella, now in the Archaeological Museum at Thessaloniki, perhaps third century BC (cited by Barry 2011, 95, n. 66). On First Style painted stucco, see also Ling 1973 and McAlpine 2014, 99–105.

<sup>76</sup> On the Alexandrian tomb (Hypogeum 3, in the Necropolis of Mustapha Pasha, c. 250–200 BC), see Adriani 1963, 136, plate 57, fig. 203. On the bird in the House of the Faun (first published as a drawing in Parland 1913, plate 1b), see Barry 2011, 98, who also cites Mau's observation of the panel from which a cup seemed to emerge (Mau 1882, 51; Barry 2011, 99, n. 76).

<sup>77</sup> As suggested by Barry 2011, 98–99. For the watercolour, see Baldassare 1981, 137, 90.

<sup>78</sup> On mosaic as a form of painting in stone, see Barry 2011, 97–98; on ornament and figure in Roman mosaic, see Muth's chapter in this volume.

<sup>79</sup> On the Alexander mosaic, and its complex relationship to Late Classical Greek painting, see Cohen 1997 and Moreno 2001.



**Fig. 9.3:** *Trompe l'œil* molluscs and marine fossils, vestibule of the House of the Faun, Pompeii, c. 125–100 BC.

*decorum* through the juxtaposition of historical, technical and natural marvels. As Barry points out, marble was itself understood as a form of *pictura* in antiquity – a naturally occurring representational medium in its own right.<sup>80</sup> By implication, the *trompe l'œil* performance enacted by faux-marble revetments in Hellenistic and Roman architecture is at once analogous and homologous: like Protogenes' sponge, it both imitates and shares in the creative impulse of the material it figures.

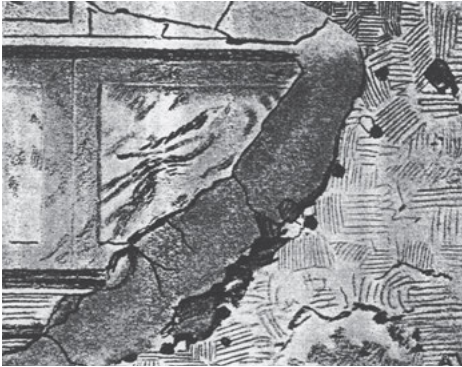
This delight in – and exaggeration of – marble's abstract patterning and intense colouration is, of course, a crucial feature of Roman fresco painting, which shuttles between figuration and abstraction in its simulation of the free-form play of marble veins and swirls.<sup>81</sup> In Second Style painting, such effects contribute to the illusionistic structuring of the wall's architectural *mimêsis*, and the spontaneous figurations of

<sup>80</sup> For an extensive discussion of this conceit in Roman art in particular, see Barry 2011, 7–133.

<sup>81</sup> For studies of *trompe l'œil* marble in Roman fresco-painting, see Eristov 1976 and 1979, with further analysis by Vander Kelen 1988; Allag and Monier 2004; Fant 2007; Mulliez-Tramond 2010; and McAlpine 2014 (esp. 99–133).



**Fig. 9.4:** Gazelles on *trompe l'œil* marble, Hypogeum 3, Necropolis of Mustapha Pasha, Alexandria, c. 500–250 BC.



**Fig. 9.5:** A bird within *trompe l'œil* marble, Alexander exedra of the House of the Faun, Pompeii, c. 125–100 BC.



**Fig. 9.6:** Painted 'relief panel' of revelling centaurs, Alexander exedra of the House of the Faun, Pompeii, c. 125–100 BC. Watercolour, c. 1831.



**Fig. 9.7a:** Front of lararium. Peristyle of the House of the Gilded Cupids, Pompeii, c. AD 50–79.

the First Style drop away.<sup>82</sup> But notably, an interest in the representational paradoxes generated by painted marble re-emerges in particularly subtle form in Fourth Style painting, contemporary with the *Natural History*.<sup>83</sup> This brings us to the House of the Gilded Cupids in Pompeii (VI.16.7,38). Here, a lararium to the household gods presents visitors entering the peristyle with a *trompe l'œil* breccia that, like Protogenes' sponge, shuttles between the status of natural marvel and marvellously contrived

<sup>82</sup> See McAlpine 2014, 106–145.

<sup>83</sup> On painted marble in the Fourth Style, see McAlpine 2014, 189–203.





**Fig. 9.7b:** Side of the same lararium, featuring a marble ‘face’.

illusion (Fig. 9.7a–b).<sup>84</sup> Emerging from the marble veins is the profile of a human face, indistinct enough to appear as the providential product of *fortuna* – whether the natural veining of the stone, or the unwitting brushstrokes of the painter (Fig. 9.7b).<sup>85</sup> Viewed as ‘marble’, the panel suggests that the stone contains an art of its own – that *natura* is herself a painter. Viewed as fresco, the painter’s sleight of hand might

<sup>84</sup> On the decorative complexities of the House of the Gilded Cupids, see Seiler 1992 and 1994 and Powers 2006 and 2011. On the house’s shrines (dedicated to the household gods and Egyptian deities respectively), see Seiler 1992, 40–41 and Powers 2006, 107–119.

<sup>85</sup> On this ambiguous form, see also Barry 2011, 95–96 and Platt 2016, 75–76.



**Fig. 9.8a:** Entrance to the peristyle (showing the east wall). House of the Gilded Cupids, Pompeii, c. AD 50–79.

remind us that the materials employed for plastering and painting are themselves derived from natural substances, including (as Vitruvius informs us) finely ground marble.<sup>86</sup> Indeed, the viewer is invited to compare the two in the lararium's colonettes of 'real' cipollino above (Fig. 9.7a).<sup>87</sup> Pictorial figuration, then, is just one option within a range of emergent processes by which one substance might be transformed into another, shaped by the generative *ratio* that infuses the world-order.

Within the House of the Gilded Cupids, the lararium's 'multi-stable', duck-rabbit profile comprises only one of a series of decorative elements that explore the boundaries between figure and abstraction, the simulated and the 'real', and between images and their material vehicles.<sup>88</sup> As one of the most extensive domestic collections of sculpture in Pompeii, the house evinces an intense interest in material assemblage, together with a highly 'vogueish' approach to the aesthetic potential of the Fourth Style.<sup>89</sup> Notably, we see a move away from the dominance of large-scale framed 'panel-paintings' in the house's final phase of decoration, alongside an interest in a variety of 'applied' elements, which occupy significant locations within the most prestigious zones of activity.<sup>90</sup> Close to the peristyle's lararium, for example, two

<sup>86</sup> Vitruv. *De Arch.* 7.6.1.

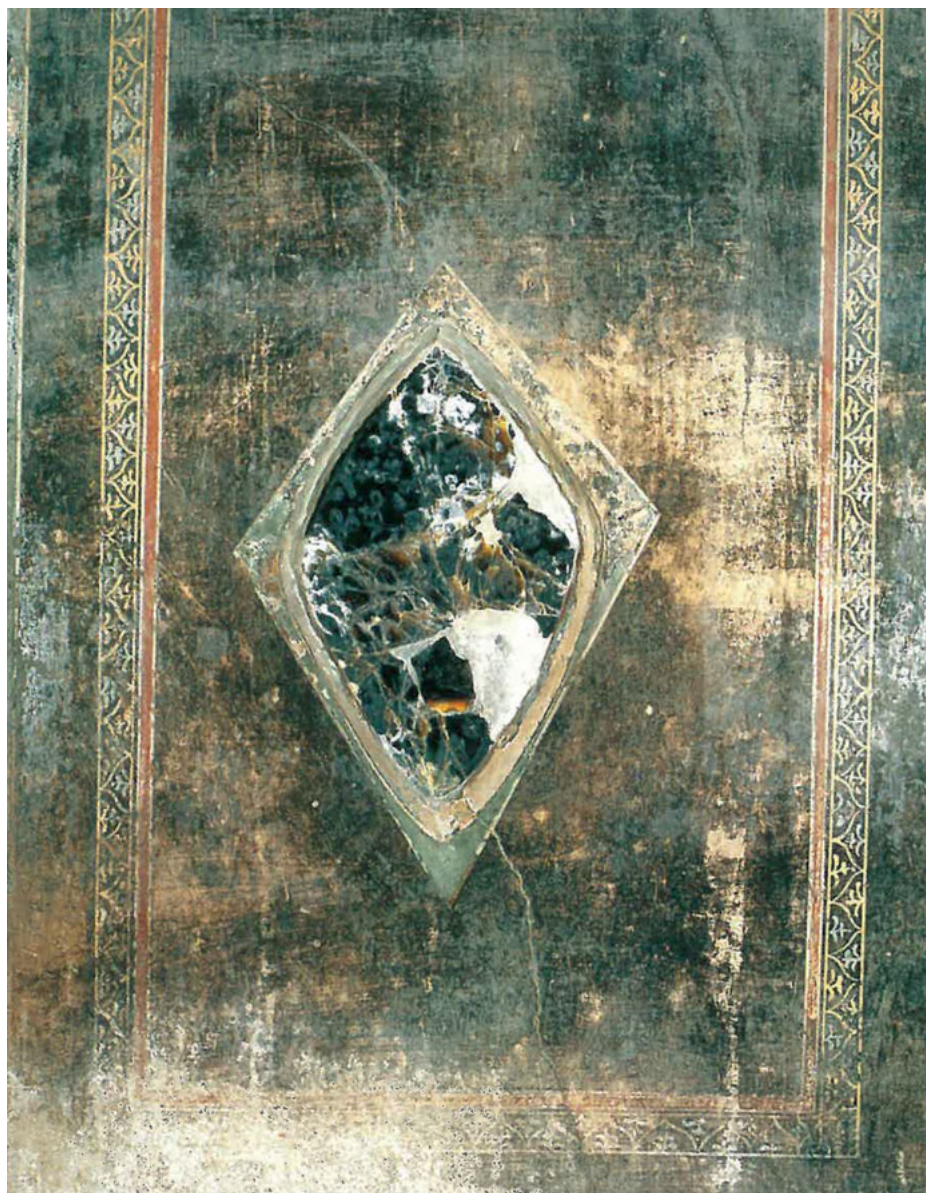
<sup>87</sup> See Seiler 1992, 40, and Powers 2006, 152 (who points out that no other *aedicula lararia* in Pompeii include real, as opposed to stucco, marble columns).

<sup>88</sup> On the concept of the 'multi-stable image', see Mitchell 1994, 45–57, 74–76.

<sup>89</sup> On the collection of over 200 artefacts discovered in the house, see Powers 2006 and 2011 and [www.stoa.org/projects/ph/house?id=21](http://www.stoa.org/projects/ph/house?id=21). On their potential function as a backdrop for theatrical performances, see Hughes 2014.

<sup>90</sup> On the more mythological content of the Third Style panel-paintings in the house, see Lorenz 2008, 317–320, 416–422; and Newby 2016, 166–177. On its inserted wall decorations, see Powers 2011.





**Fig. 9.8b:** Detail of embedded obsidian 'mirror' from the same peristyle.



**Fig. 9.9:** Second embedded obsidian 'mirror', peristyle, east wall. House of the Gilded Cupids, Pompeii, c. AD 50–79.

obsidian panels are impressed into the wall at a slight angle and carefully framed with decorative bands (Figs. 9.8, 9.9a and 9.9b). As 'applied' ornaments, these pieces of dark volcanic glass are prestige items, valued for their rarity, exotic origin and reflective capacities.<sup>91</sup> They operate, in effect, as mirrors. In this sense, they echo and magnify the reflective potential of fresco painting, which was itself treated as a highly polished surface: both the outer surface of the architectural structure and its inset *ornamenta* are thus treated as potential generators of *imagines*, which float across the walls and within the spaces they frame.<sup>92</sup> Obsidian mirrors, Pliny tells us, reflect 'the shadow of the object rather than the image (*in speculis parietum pro imagine umbras reddente*)', creating an ambiguous, unstable form of figuration that parallels that of the faux-marble face.<sup>93</sup> It is telling that, as Jessica Powers has observed, the House of

<sup>91</sup> On the obsidian panels, which were inserted into the eastern peristyle wall (accessible from the atrium and close to the two lararia), see Powers 2006, 1, 157–158 and 2011, 11–12, 17–19; Powers notes that a similar specimen was also strategically placed in an area of high traffic and abundant light in the House of the Orchard (I.9.5); further examples of 'dark blue glass' were embedded into the walls of the House of the Ephebe (I.7.10–12) and the House of the Mirror (IX.7.18–19). On the use of obsidian in antiquity, see Tykot and Ammermann 1997 and Lapatin 2015, 123–124, who note that it was sourced on Italian islands such as Sardinia and Lipari, the Aegean islands of Melos and Giali, and in east Africa.

<sup>92</sup> On the treatment of fresco painting as a reflective surface, see Vitruvius *De Arch.* 7.5.1 (plastered surfaces are *expolitiones*, 'polishings') and 2.8.10 (on stucco polished until it is as reflective as glass, *uti vitri perluciditatem videantur habere*); such translucence must also have been enhanced by coatings of wax (cf. *ibid.* 7.9.4). For discussion, see Barry 2011, 96–97; on the implications for Roman practices of viewing (and voyeurism!), see Bartsch 2000.

<sup>93</sup> *NH* 36.196–197: 'Among the various kinds of glass, we may also reckon Obsian glass, a substance very similar to the stone which Obsius discovered in Ethiopia. This stone is of a very dark colour, and sometimes transparent; but it is dull to the sight, and reflects, when attached as a mirror to walls, the



**Fig. 9.10:** Thetis gazing at the Shield of Achilles, exedra G, north wall. House of the Gilded Cupids, Pompeii, c. AD 50–79.

the Gilded Cupids also featured a figurative panel of Thetis gazing into the shield of Achilles in Room G, accessed from the very spot within the peristyle where the larger obsidian panel was installed (Fig. 9.10), as well as a small panel of Narcissus gazing at his own reflection (in Room C).<sup>94</sup> Such painted panels warn of the slippery qualities of the reflected image, whilst establishing a dialogue between narrative *pinax* and

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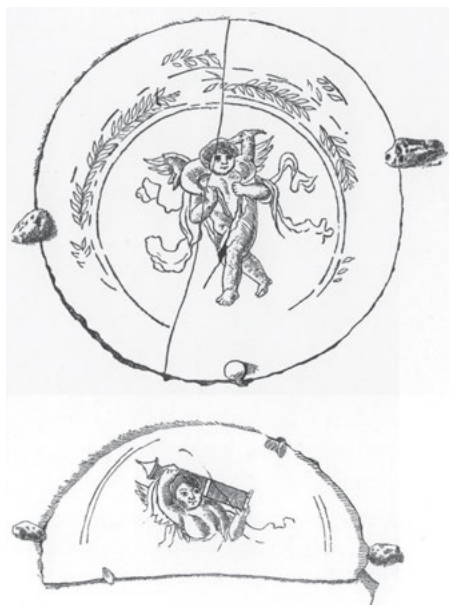
shadow of the object rather than the image' (*In genere vitri et obsiana numerantur ad similitudinem lapidis, quem in Aethiopia invenit Obsius, nigerrimi coloris, aliquando et tralucidi, crassiore visu atque in speculis parietum pro imagine umbras reddente*).

<sup>94</sup> Powers 2011, 12–14. The Thetis panel is in the Fourth Style, but was painted after earthquake damage to fit into an earlier Third Style scheme (the subject of which is unknown): see Seiler 1992, 35, 111–112; Lorenz 2008, 318; and Newby 2016, 174–177. On the challenge of depicting the Shield of Achilles across various ancient media, see Squire 2013, esp. 169–170 (on Campanian wall-painting); on the cautionary example posed by paintings of Narcissus, see Elsner 1996 and 2007, 132–176 and Platt 2002.





**Fig. 9.11a:** Glass disc with gilt Cupid applied to back – embedded into the wall of cubiculum I. House of the Gilded Cupids, Pompeii, c. AD 50–79.



**Fig. 9.11b:** Artist's reconstruction of glass discs in the cubiculum of the House of the Gilded Cupids (including the example illustrated in Fig. 9.11a).



**Fig. 9.12:** Cubiculum I, featuring Fourth Style 'wallpaper pattern', north and east walls. House of the Gilded Cupids, Pompeii, c. AD 50–79.

natural material that breaks down any straightforward distinction between ‘painting’ and ‘decorative accessory’.

This slippage, or communication, between different media and forms of figuration extends to the Cupids (most of them now sadly lost or destroyed) that give the house its name (Figures 9.11–12).<sup>95</sup> Incised in gold leaf applied to glass discs set into the wall of a cubiculum (I) accessed from the peristyle, these are viewed through a form of manmade glass which, in its material properties, echoes the naturally produced volcanic glass of the obsidian ‘mirrors’.<sup>96</sup> Such an interplay between the artificial and spontaneously generated draws attention to nature’s own representational capacities within and as raw matter, as well as man’s capacity to work with nature to rival (and even surpass) nature herself. Applied to the back of the glass discs, the cupids float within their depths not as shadowy reflections but as brightly glittering figures, echoing yet intensifying the matte gold ochre of the wall that frames them. At the same time, the carefully crafted glass discs formally echo (or anticipate) a series of eight painted ‘portrait’ medallions in a further cubiculum (room R) (Figs. 9.13a–b). Displayed alongside a panel of ‘Venus fishing’, the young women in the tondos might be understood as the goddess’ desirable ‘bait’, dressed as maenads and ready for festive activities (Fig. 9.14).<sup>97</sup>

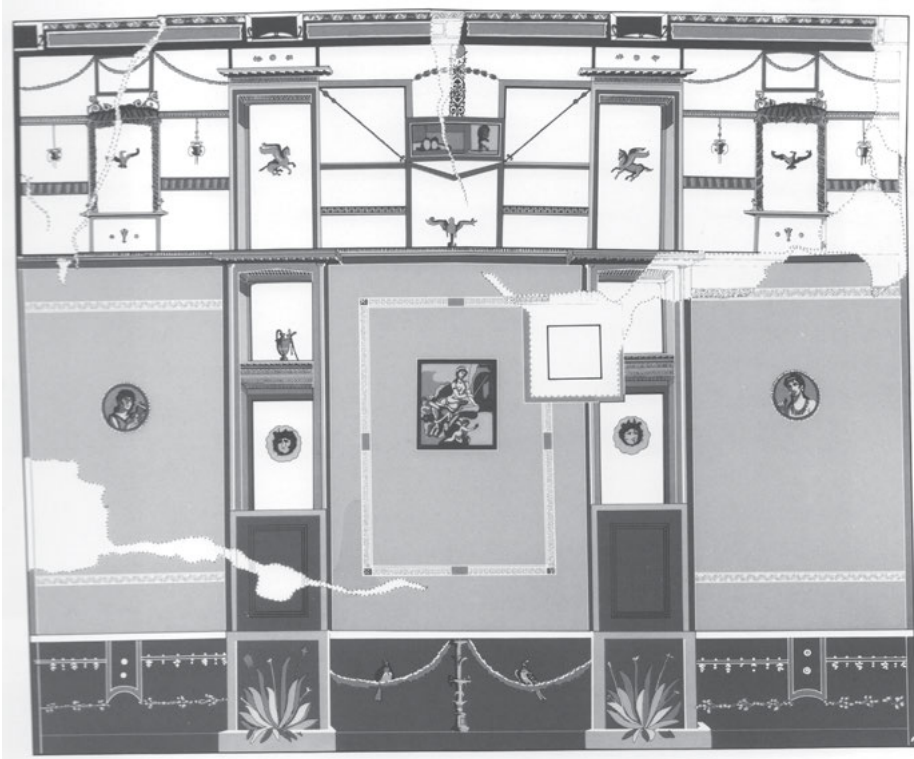
In this light, we might re-read the so-called ‘wallpaper pattern’ of the cupids’ cubiculum as a form of ‘net’, cast by Venus’ eager assistants (Fig. 9.15).<sup>98</sup> Whether simulating fabric, echoing the structural patterns of *opus reticulatum* or indeed the *opus signinum* grid of the floor in an adjacent cubiculum (M) (Fig. 9.16), the wall’s geometric surface here abandons any pretence at simulating *trompe l’œil* architecture, forming a pointed contrast with the faux-wood panels that flank the room’s doorway and the faux-marble of its socle. Rather, the red ‘net’ cast across the cubiculum’s walls asserts an order and regularity that liberates ornament from the *illusion* of structure, whilst echoing structural patterns found in different materials. At the same time, of course, the wall provides real structural support for the inserted glass discs, reminding us that although painted ornament might simply coat the ‘surface’ of the wall, it is nevertheless chemically bound to and suspended within several layers of protec-

<sup>95</sup> On the discs, which comprised an incised sheet of gold leaf on a blue ground sealed under transparent glass, see Seiler 1992, 50; and Powers 2011, 16. As Powers 2011, 20, observes, two gold-glass panels featuring cupids were also discovered in Pompeii VII.2.3 (in a room accessed from the atrium of a bakery). On Roman gold-glass more generally, see Goldstein 1989, Whitehouse 1996 and Lapatin 2015, 34.

<sup>96</sup> Note Pliny’s comment that obsidian can also be produced artificially (*NH* 36.198).

<sup>97</sup> On the paintings in cubiculum R, see Seiler 1992.

<sup>98</sup> On the Fourth Style ‘wallpaper’ or ‘carpet’ pattern [*Tapetenmuster*] in this room, see Seiler 1992, 102–103; and Powers 2006, 165–168, with Barbet and Allag 1972; Ling 1991, 84–85, 188–192; Barbet et al. 1997; and Laken 2001 on the style more generally.



**Fig. 9.13a:** Reconstruction of the north wall of cubiculum R. House of the Gilded Cupids, Pompeii, c. AD 50–79.



**Fig. 9.13b:** Painted portrait medallion from the same north wall.





**Fig. 9.14:** Venus fishing, cubiculum R, north wall. House of the Gilded Cupids, Pompeii, c. AD 50–79.

tive plaster. Just as Venus the Angler is both a cosmic and cosmetic force, then, so the ornamentation of the house she oversees might be viewed as both structural and ornamental.

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Attesting a vigorous interest in materials and forms of diverse origin, in different modes and registers of figuration, and in continuities as well as contrasts between the components of its rich assemblage, the House of the Gilded Cupids constitutes



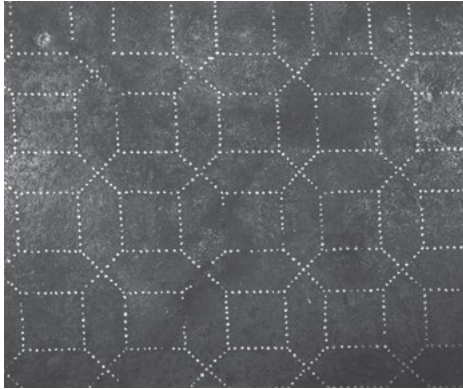
**Fig. 9.15:** Close-up of ‘wall-paper pattern’, cubiculum I, east wall. House of the Gilded Cupids, Pompeii, c. AD 50–79.

a cosmos in its own right. In its almost ‘encyclopaedic’ embrace, an initially overwhelming eclecticism resolves into observable patterns and correspondences so that, like Pliny’s *Natural History*, no component can be described as *supervacuum*. Both cultural assemblages testify to a particularly Roman combination of order and acquisitiveness – a totalising mode of ornamentation that sees human *artificio* reflected, anticipated, figured and symbolised in the material workings of the *mundus* itself. The architectural theorist Antoine Picon has observed that ornament ‘appears as a structure of exchange rather than a static entity’.<sup>99</sup> It is always in motion (or ‘vibration’), a mode of communication and expression, both ordering and disruptive, a life force or – to think in Stoic terms – a form of *pneuma*. In his account of the cosmos, Pliny comments that the *mundus* is ‘at once the work of nature and nature herself’ (2.2): that is, *natura* can symbolise or draw attention to natural processes of becoming, at the same time as simply ‘being’.<sup>100</sup> The category of ornament, I suggest, retains its power and appeal because it combines the same first- and second-order properties: it both adorns environments and is an integral part of the environments it adorns; it invites contemplation yet floats free of ‘meaning’; it generates figuration, whilst resisting the pull of representational ontologies. It is at once natural and deeply cultural, a worldly good, and the world itself.

<sup>99</sup> Picon 2013, 16.

<sup>100</sup> *NH* 2.2: *idemque rerum naturae opus et rerum ipsa natura*.





**Fig. 9.16:** *Opus signinum* floor, cubiculum M, House of the Gilded Cupids, Pompeii, c. AD 50–79.

## Abbreviations

- DNO** Kansteiner, S. et al. (eds.) (2014) *Der Neue Overbeck. Die antiken Schriftquellen zu den bildenden Künsten der Griechen*, 5 vols. Berlin.
- Stob.** Wachsmuth, C. and Hense, O. (1884) *Ioannis Stobaei Anthologium*, 3 vols. Berlin.
- SVF** von Arnim, A. (1903–1905, 1924) *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, 4 vols. Leipzig.

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- 9.6: After Barry 2011, 730, fig. 2.25.
- 9.7a: After Seiler 1992, fig. 294.
- 9.7b: After Seiler 1992, fig. 291.
- 9.8a: After Seiler 1992, fig. 276.
- 9.8b: After Seiler 1992, fig. 283.
- 9.9: After Seiler 1992, fig. 280.
- 9.10: After Seiler 1992, fig. 190.
- 9.11a: After Seiler 1992, fig. 314.
- 9.11b: After Seiler 1992, fig. 313.
- 9.12: Photograph by Verity Platt.
- 9.13a: After Seiler 1992, fig. 376.
- 9.13b: After Seiler 1992, fig. 391.
- 9.14: After Seiler 1992, fig. 389.
- 9.15: After Seiler 1992, fig. 321.
- 9.16: After Seiler 1992, fig. 347.

Nicola Barham

## Esteemed ornament: An overlooked value for approaching Roman visual culture\*

Translation can be a tricky business. In Russia, for example, a ‘lunatic’ neighbour might cause less consternation than a visiting English-speaker would anticipate – unaware that, for the Russian, a ‘lunatic’ is merely a ‘sleepwalker’. In Latin, meanwhile, a *camera* is a room; a *gymnasium* is commonly a school; likewise, the Latin words *audio*, *video* and *disco* do not amount to a list of contemporary entertainments, but rather serve as an effective educational motto (‘I hear’, ‘I see’, ‘I learn’). Words do not necessarily mean what they first appear. Indeed, the very distance between ancient words and their modern counterparts can complicate first impressions of proximity.<sup>1</sup>

In the case of the Latin terms *ornamentum* and *figura*, the distance between the ancient words and their modern counterparts is particularly important. On the one hand, the ancient application of these terms to visual media may, on first impression, seem to align with modern usage: it is all too easy to think that the ancient words map neatly onto our art historical distinctions between ‘ornament’ and ‘figure’. On the other hand, as I set out to argue in this chapter, a closer examination reveals that a fundamentally different model of Roman aesthetic conceptualisation is at work. Even while these words must serve as Latin counterparts for our modern English terms, their semantics are quite different.<sup>2</sup>

In the Roman cultural imaginary there is no straightforward dichotomy between the categories of figure and ornament. In Latin, first of all, the term *figura* signifies not only representational figures, but in fact also any kind of shape: the term fails to operate as the kind of marker of formal distinction that we all too easily anticipate.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The failure of concepts and taxonomies of value to translate between cultures and languages is a theme that is well known for having intrigued Foucault; see especially Foucault 1966, and for an English translation, Foucault 1971. Cf. e.g. Squire 2010, 136–138 (on our talk of ancient ‘art’, and parallel problems of approaching e.g. ‘economy’ and ‘sexuality’).

<sup>2</sup> Alternative Latin terms to *figura* include *species*, *frons*, *facies* and *vultus*, but all carry this same ambiguity and can refer to a shape of any kind (for a case study, with further bibliography, cf. Squire 2016). The Latin term *decor* – so obviously the etymological ancestor of English ‘decoration’ – is the chief possible alternative to *ornamentum*, but instead of indicating a subsidiary aesthetic form, it instead denotes beauty (or a beautiful object) – and often a beauty appropriate to a given locale: cf. Reinhardt’s chapter in this volume.

<sup>3</sup> There is no word in Latin that distinguishes between a representational shape and a more abstract form.

Something similar can be said for *ornamentum*. A survey of how this ancient Latin word was applied to objects of visual culture – across a range of Roman texts and genres – reveals a notion quite different from that of the term's modern etymological descendants.<sup>4</sup> While certainly pertaining to a visual form of beauty, the Roman notion of ornament in no way points to something subsidiary or of lesser aesthetic value. On the contrary, an *ornamentum* is defined for, and recognised by, its impacting power: ornament is, by definition, something *esteemed*. As a result, in the Roman context, there is no straightforward binary between figure and ornament: the textual evidence points to the disjuncture between such emic ancient aesthetic conceptual apparatus on the one hand, and the more familiar, and more recent, conceptual paradigms with which we, as scholars, habitually approach classical material culture, on the other.

Nor, importantly, is it only the formal categories of 'figure' and 'ornament' that this ancient evidence complicates. After all, the apparently simple binary between 'figure' and 'ornament' carries with it the weight of a medial discourse descending from Kant, and with roots that go back still further in intellectual history. According to this discourse, the *ergon* ('work') is privileged over the *parergon* (the work's supposed mere 'accompaniment') – a distinction that Kant exemplified in his hierarchy of palace over columns, body over drapery, and picture over frame.<sup>5</sup> Such medial hierarchies that prioritise a central 'work' over its accompanying 'ornament' mirror the intra-image privileging of a representational 'figure' over the 'ornament' that neighbours it. Meanwhile, wherever the formal category of 'ornament' is judged inferior to 'figure', all manner of media that privilege such 'ornamental' modes of patterned, surface effects, over and above a figural representation of depth, tend to be devalued and condemned to the status of the 'minor arts'.

The medial bias of classical art historians has a long pedigree. Emerging with Winckelmann (shortly before Kant's definition of the *parergon*), and in the midst of the Neoclassical championing of figure over ornament, the discipline has from its very beginnings prioritised figural representations – not only above the ornamental mode, but ultimately as the essential form of classical art.<sup>6</sup> As a result, it is standard for classical art historians to isolate figural vignettes from the extended 'ornamental' wall frescoes to which they belong; likewise, 'figural' sculpture is consistently priv-

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4 Etymological descendants include not only the English 'ornament', but also of course French 'l'ornement', German 'das Ornament', etc.

5 For Kant's critique (§ 14 of his 'Analytic of the beautiful', in the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment*), see Kant 1924, 65 – as cited and discussed by Squire in this volume, 18–20 (cf. e.g. Neer, 206–209; Platt, 241–242, 252–253). It is this devaluing and separation of the *parergon* that Derrida famously critiqued: Derrida 1978 (with English translation in Derrida 1987). For a detailed discussion of Kant's thinking, the Derridean critique, and the implications for classical art history, see now Platt and Squire 2017, esp. 38–59.

6 For Winckelmann and his founding influence on the discipline of classical art history, see initially Harloe 2013, esp. 65–130.



ileged against, and read in isolation from, the ‘ornamental’ facades of the buildings that frame it; by extension, the ‘decorative’ mosaics that survive in such abundance are largely overlooked in favour of the Roman porticos and portraits that much more rarely make it.<sup>7</sup> The Enlightenment’s prioritising of figure over ornament still remains the bedrock within our modern-day narratives of Greek and Roman art.

But is this Neoclassical paradigm really indicative of ancient aesthetic values? This chapter contends that a quite different concept of ornament informed Roman thinking about making and viewing images. The categories that we favour inevitably colour what it is that we see, while cultural practices of viewing can in turn shape conceptual categories. The chapter thus traces the application of the language of ornament both in Latin and in the Greek spoken in the Eastern Empire: I draw on examples from literature, papyri and epigraphic sources in order to reconstruct an alternative, ancient Roman paradigm of ornament. The chapter thereby seeks to open up new avenues of approaching visual works, challenging more familiar, and more recent, systems of value based on the dichotomy between ‘ornament’ and ‘figure’: this Roman evidence questions not only the coherence of our medial concept of ornament, but also its applicability to ancient Roman visual objects; at the same time, it leads us to re-think any hierarchy of the figurative over the ornamental. The evidence presented in this chapter, in short, provides an alternative, native window onto the valences of *ornamentum* in the Roman world, as well as of the forms and media that *ornamenta* take.

## The evidence

Traditionally, the Latin concept of *ornamentum* is perhaps most commonly recognised in relation to Roman material culture for its application to jewellery, and the wider ‘get-up’ of a woman’s finery.<sup>8</sup> Certainly, both the Latin term *ornamentum*, and the Greek *kosmos* (which Pliny uses to translate it, and which is employed widely elsewhere in an analogous sense), do each retain this function of indicating (often feminine) finery throughout the classical period.<sup>9</sup> Thus, in Latin literature, as early as in the plays of Plautus in the third century BC, the adornments of a woman are very commonly referred to as her *ornamenta*. For example, the much put-upon wife

<sup>7</sup> For such treatment of wall-paintings, see e.g. Swindler 1929, 265–302; for a critique, cf. Squire 2017, esp. 188–196. Studies that read sculptures in isolation, and privilege sculpture and architecture over all other media, are to be found in almost any introductory account of Roman art. On the ‘frames’ of classical art, see now the essays in Platt and Squire 2017.

<sup>8</sup> On the language of *ornamentum* and *decor* – as well as *kosmos* in Greek – cf. the chapters in this volume by e.g. Squire (esp. 2, n. 3), Hölscher (esp. 67–68), Dietrich (esp. 197) and Platt (esp. 244–246).

<sup>9</sup> Plin. *NH* 2.8; for a general commentary, see Schmitt 2013.

of the eponymous anti-hero Menaechmus complains that her husband ‘robs me and secretly carries off my adornments [to give] to his strumpets!’ (*me despoliat, mea ornamenta clam ad meretrices degerit*).<sup>10</sup> The terminology persists, appearing again 300 years later, for example, in Quintilian’s linguistic analogies centred on the idea of a woman’s adornment.<sup>11</sup> In Greek, meanwhile, the use of the term *kosmos* in a related sense is as old as Homer, who describes Hera decking herself with all her finery (πάντα περὶ χροῖ ἤκατο κόσμον, *Il.* 2.187); it also appears widely in Euripides’ plays, particularly in the context of fine robes provided for the burial of the deceased.<sup>12</sup> So much, so far, is familiar. In these cases, and others like them, Kant’s notion of the *parergon* – of a visual form that appears *par-* (in Greek, ‘alongside’), the *ergon* (‘the work’ – here the wearer’s body) – would seem to have its rough cultural counterpart.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, one could be forgiven for assuming that the ancient category of ornament is entirely equivalent to post-Enlightenment uses. Yet in Latin, from as early as the first century BC, in the speeches of the Roman orator Cicero (and with still earlier, though overall rarer, examples surviving in Greek), this language of ornament is also applied to very different visual material.<sup>14</sup> Here it is not jewels, ribbons and trinkets which are evoked, but rather objects that classical scholarship would identify as works of figural art.

## Figure as ornament: Not a category of the ‘additional’

As we turn to look at wider uses of the notion of ornament in surviving Latin texts, we find that not only Kantian *parerga*, but also major visual works clearly designed as focal objects are denoted through this language. Thus, in Cicero’s first-century BC prosecution of Verres (the infamous ex-praetor of Sicily) the language of ornament

<sup>10</sup> Plaut. *Men.* 804. See also Plaut. *Mil.* 980, 1127, 1147, 130; Plaut. *Mostell.* 248, 294; Plaut. *Pseud.* 343. See also Ter. *Haut.* 835.

<sup>11</sup> See e.g. Quint. *Inst.* 11.1.3; for other references to jewels and finery in these terms, see e.g. Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.152; Cic. *Att.* 2.1.1; Liv. 5.25.8; 34.7.5; 39.44.2; Curt. 5.6.18; Val. Max. 4.4 praef. 5.6.8; [Quint.] *Dec. min.* 359.1.2; 368.3.3; 373 praef.1; Plin. *NH* 34.162 (for horse trappings); Suet. *Iul.* 84.4; Suet. *Calig.* 39.1; Fronto, *Ep.* 2.1.1; Apul. *De deo Soc.* 23.

<sup>12</sup> E.g. Eur. *Alc.* 144, 161.

<sup>13</sup> On this, see above, n. 5.

<sup>14</sup> Greek parallels seem to lie behind this Roman usage, although examples in Greek before the first century BC are comparatively few (see, however, Aesch. *Supp.* 463; Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 47.1; Arist. *Oec.* 1349b; Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1123a; Arist. *Pol.* 1314b, 1321a; Arist. *Dem.* 13.28, 22.13; Hdt. 1.183, 3.24; Isae. 5.42; Isoc. 7.66, 15.234; Pl. *Leg.* 6.761b–d, 763d; Pl. *Plt.* 288c; Pl. *Alc.* 2.148e; Pl. *Crit.* 115c, 117a–b; Thuc. 6.54). It is in the period of Roman influence that the paradigm apparently becomes most established; indeed, one might speculate that this is an example of a concept native to one culture subsequently being appropriated and popularised by another.

is repeatedly used to describe the prized sculptures that this governor stole from the island under his care.<sup>15</sup> Consider the following passage:<sup>16</sup>

*Hi se patrum fortunam ac dignitatem recuperare arbitrabantur, cum illa maiorum ornamenta in eorum oppido collocabantur. erant signa ex aere complura; in his eximia pulchritudine ipsa Himera in muliebrem figuram habitumque formata ... erat etiam Stesichori poetae statua senilis incurva ... summo ut putant artificio facta, qui fuit Himerae ... etiam ... capella quaedam est ... scite facta et venuste.*

They [the people of Himera] thought that they were recovering the fortune and dignity of their fathers, when those ornaments of their ancestors were being placed in their town.<sup>17</sup> There were many statues of bronze; among these a statue of Himera herself, of exceptional beauty, formed in the shape and dress of a woman ... There was also a statue of the poet Stesichorus who was from Himera, [depicted] as a stooped old man – [a statue] people consider to have been made with the highest workmanship ... There was also ... a she-goat ... formed with skill and charm.

Three statues here are listed amidst the many bronzes (*ex aere complura*) that are counted among the ‘ornaments’ of the Himerans and identified as being of particular note. These works are recorded as pieces of no common impact – being of ‘exceptional beauty’ (*eximia pulchritudine*), ‘the highest workmanship’ (*summo ... artificio facta*), and ‘made with skill and charm’ (*scite facta et venuste*). The statues of Himera are works of the highest class. Yet they are conceptualised with a term that is commonly used elsewhere to indicate ‘jewellery’: they are identified as ornaments.

The fourth part of Cicero’s second speech offers a second example. Here, Cicero once again challenges Verres over his treatment of Sicily’s statues:<sup>18</sup>

*Quid? Agrigento nonne eiusdem P. Scipionis monumentum, signum Apollinis pulcherrimum, cuius in femore litteris minutis argenteis nomen Myronis erat inscriptum, ex Aesculapii religiosissimo fano sustulisti? ... vehementer commota civitas est. uno enim tempore Agrigentini beneficium Africani, religionem domesticam, ornamentum urbis, indicium victoriae, testimonium societatis requirebant.*

What? Did you not also at Agrigentum take away a monument of the same Publius Scipio, a most beautiful statue of Apollo, on whose thigh there was the name of Myron, inscribed in diminutive silver letters, out of that most holy temple of Aesculapius? ... the whole citizenry was greatly excited. For the Agrigentines were regretting at the same time the kindness of Africanus and an object of local religion and an ornament of their city and a record of their victory and an evidence of their alliance with us.

<sup>15</sup> Cic. *Verr.* 1.14; 2.1.54, 57 (arguably a kind of hendiadys here), 58–59; 2.2.86, 113; 2.3.9; 2.4.6, 18, 71–72, 93, 97, 103, 120–123, 126, 132–133; 2.5.124, 126, 184, 186. For the particularly social valences of the application of this language to statues, see Bravi 2012.

<sup>16</sup> Cic. *Verr.* 2.2.86–87 (translations based on Yonge’s 1903 Loeb edition).

<sup>17</sup> The town of Thermae: Himera had been sacked and the new town established nearby (cf. e.g. Caven 1990, 36).

<sup>18</sup> Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.93.

Once more a famous statue is mentioned – this time a statue of Apollo, dedicated by the general Scipio (*P. Scipionis monumentum*), signed by the renowned Greek sculptor Myron (*nomen Myronis erat inscriptum*), and with the sculptor's name marked in letters of silver (*litteris ... argenteis*), then made inviolable by its dedication in a shrine – from which Verres steals it.<sup>19</sup> Cicero tells how this object was valued by the people of Agrigento on many fronts: as an object of local religion (*religionem domesticam*), as a record of their victory (*indiciū victoriae*), as a sign of Scipio's favour (*beneficium Africani*), and – with a nod to the pride of the jury – 'as evidence of their alliance with us' (*testimonium societatis*). But notably, it was also missed, Cicero tells us, as 'an ornament of the city' (*ornamentum urbis*). Once again, a figural sculpture is classed as an 'ornament'. That such a figural work should be identified in such terms is intriguing. And if the meaning of the word is to be taken literally, the suggestion would be that this exceptional sculpted figure was aesthetically valued, not as a discrete object of perfection for its own sake, but rather for different reasons: it was valued for what it could *do*. The statue, like the jewellery in other references, was valued for its transitive effect on the world around it – for the beauty it lent to the town.

Nor is sculpture the only valued figural medium that Cicero treats in this language. Paintings too are spoken about in the same terms:<sup>20</sup>

*Aedis Minervae est in Insula, de qua ante dixi; quam Marcellus non attigit, quam plenam atque ornatam reliquit; quae ab isto sic spoliata atque direpta est non ut ab hosteali [hoste aliquo/] ... sed ut a barbaris praedonibus vexata esse videatur. pugna erat equestris Agathocli regis in tabulis picta praeclare; iis autem tabulis interiores templi parietes vestiebantur. nihil erat ea pictura nobilius, nihil Syracusis quod magis visendum putaretur. has tabulas M. Marcellus, cum omnia victoria illa sua profana fecisset, tamen religione impeditus non attigit; iste, cum illa propter diuturnam pacem fidelitatemque populi Syracusani sacra religiosaque accepisset, omnis eas tabulas abstulit, parietes quorum ornatus tot saecula manserant, tot bella effugerant, nudos ac deformatos reliquit.*

There is a temple of Minerva in the island [of Sicily], of which I have already spoken, which [the general] Marcellus did not touch, which he left stocked and adorned, but which was so stripped and plundered by Verres that it seems to have been in the hands, not of any enemy ... but of some barbarian pirates. There was a cavalry battle of their king Agathocles, exquisitely painted in panels, and with these pictures the inside walls of the temple were decked. Nothing could be nobler than those paintings; there was nothing at Syracuse that was thought more worthy of going to see. These pictures, Marcus Marcellus, though by that victory of his he had divested everything of its sacred inviolability of character, still, out of respect for religion, never touched; Verres – although in consequence of the long peace and the loyalty of the Syracusan people, he had received them as sacred and under the protection of religion – took away all those pictures and left naked and unsightly those walls whose ornament had remained inviolate for so many ages and had escaped so many wars.

<sup>19</sup> For further ancient accounts of the fifth-century BC sculptor Myron, see Plin. *NH* 34.19; Paus. 2.30, 6.2, 8.13 and 9.30; Strab. 14.1; Vitruv. 1.1, 3.praef.

<sup>20</sup> Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.122.

Once more, it is a highly respected figural medium, this time panel-painting – arguably the very kind of painted scene that Kant explicitly identifies as an *ergon* against the mere ornamental *parergon* of its frame – that is here celebrated through the language of the ornamental.<sup>21</sup> The temple of Minerva, Cicero tells us, was well stocked with treasures, and remained adorned (*plenam atque ornatam*) under the Republican general Marcellus with the paintings that decked its walls – despite its location in enemy territory. Verres, by contrast, stripped these works away, leaving ‘naked and unsightly’ (*nudos ac deformatos*) those walls whose ornamentation (*ornatus* – the variant form of the noun) had stood the test of time over so many years. Gone were the paintings that had long served as the valued ornaments of the temple. And once again, it is figural paintings – described in the most superlative terms, as having ‘nothing more notable than them’ (*nihil ... ea pictura nobilius*) and ‘nothing more worth going to see’ (*nihil ... quod magis visendum*) – which are spoken of as ‘the ornaments’ (*ornatus*) of the temple space. The most noble and impressive paintings in existence are here celebrated as ornaments to their environment.

The orator immediately couples this with a second example:<sup>22</sup>

*Ille deos deorum spoliis ornari noluit, hic [Verres] ornamenta Minervae virginis in meretriciam domum transtulit. viginti et septem praeterea tabulas pulcherrime pictas ex eadem aede sustulit, in quibus erant imagines Siciliae regum ac tyrannorum, quae non solum pictorum artificio delectabant, sed etiam commemoratione hominum et cognitione formarum. ac videte quanto taetrior hic tyrannus Syracusanis fuerit quam quisquam superiorum: quom [quia cum] illi tamen ornarint templa deorum immortalium, hic etiam illorum monumenta atque ornamenta sustulerit.*

The one man [the general Marcellus] was unwilling to adorn gods with spoils taken from gods; the other [Verres] transferred the ornaments of virgin Minerva to the house of a prostitute. He took away from the same temple, furthermore, twenty-seven pictures most beautifully painted, among which were the likenesses of the kings and tyrants of Sicily, which were not only pleasing for the skill of the painters, but also as a reminder of the men and [for giving] an idea of their appearance. And see how much worse a tyrant this man was to the Syracusans than any of those that had gone before. For they at least adorned the temples of the immortal gods, while this man took away the monuments and ornaments from the gods.

Cicero here adds a collection of twenty-seven more paintings, including the portraits ‘of the kings and tyrants of Sicily’ (*imagines Siciliae regum ac tyrannorum*), to the cavalry scenes he has already noted. In this way, artistic genre is revealed as being no hindrance to a painting’s inclusion in the category of *ornamentum*. For whether, in our modern terms, they be history paintings (like the cavalry scene depicting Sicily’s past king), or individual portraits, each picture evidently belongs here to the group of works with which the tyrants once adorned the temple (*ornarint templa*) – and thus to the category of ornaments which Verres took away (*ornamenta sustulerit*). It would

<sup>21</sup> See above, n. 5.

<sup>22</sup> Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.123.

appear that works of figural representation, such as portraits, were not conceived as distinct from the broader category of ornament. A work could be appreciated concurrently both for the successful mimeticism of its figures, and for its ornamental impact upon its wider context. Figural works, in other words, could be simultaneously viewed from these two perspectives: the one interested in their representational content, the other concerned with their external, formal impact. There was no binary division between these aesthetic modes in the Roman mind: figural images were themselves understood as ornaments.

Cicero uses this language widely, and in a variety of contexts.<sup>23</sup> Importantly, however, there are parallels for the Ciceronian usage. Consider the following passage from Pliny's *Natural History*, written in the AD 70s:<sup>24</sup>

*Pompeius Magnus in ornamentis theatri mirabiles fama posuit effigies, ob id diligentius magnorum artificum ingeniis elaborates, inter quas legitur Eutychis a XX liberis rogo inlata Trallibus, enixa XXX partus.*

Pompey the Great set up among the ornaments of his theatre some statues of marvellous report – [famous] since they are most carefully worked with the ingenious skill of exceptional craftsmen. Among these [there is an identifying inscription] which reads 'Eutyches of Tralles, carried to her funeral pyre by twenty of her children – having given birth thirty times.'

Once more, a public figural statue with symbolic implications (here for recommending childbearing) is celebrated among the ornaments of a building – this time, in the context of Rome's first permanent theatre (*in ornamentis theatri*).<sup>25</sup> Even for Pliny – whose *Natural History* has typically been read as proof of the pre-eminence afforded to naturalistic representation in Roman aesthetics – a statue of the highest quality could evidently still be framed, and appreciated, not in terms of its skill, but on the grounds of its ornamental impact.<sup>26</sup>

The term *ornamentum* reappears with this application in the works of countless Roman authors, and over a remarkably long timespan. Ovid can similarly write of a theatre's statues through the language of ornament, speaking of the *aurea quae splendent ornato signa theatro* ('gilded statues which gleam in the adorned theatre').<sup>27</sup> Vitruvius likewise discusses caryatids – arguably the ancient world's most renowned

<sup>23</sup> See above, n. 15; cf. also Cic. *Fin.* 3.2.8; *Prov. cons.* 6–7; *Leg. Man.* 40, 66; *Sest.* 93; *Off.* 2.22.76; *De orat.* 162; *Att.* 1.4.3, 1.6.2, 5.10.5.

<sup>24</sup> Plin. *NH* 7.34 (translation based on Rackham's 1942 Loeb edition).

<sup>25</sup> On childbearing as the proper business of the Roman matron, see e.g. D'Ambra 2007, 45–92.

<sup>26</sup> For a recent study of Pliny's interest in naturalism, see e.g. Bussels 2012, 25–56. For a more subtle reading, championing Pliny's 'materialist aesthetics', see Platt's chapter in this volume.

<sup>27</sup> Ov. *Ars am.* 3.231: the image forms one in which Ovid lectures his female addressee about her make-up – beautiful in its final effect, but not in essence (just as the gilded statues of the theatre are recognised when under construction as gold-painted blocks of wood).

architectural sculptural type – as a first instance among ‘the many ornaments in an architect’s work’ (*multa ornamenta ... in operibus architecti*).<sup>28</sup> The satirist Juvenal, in the second century AD, similarly rails at the ‘bronzes of Polyclitus, old ornaments of Asian gods’ (*Polycliti / aera, Asianorum vetera ornamenta deorum*) which are offered to the rich man who loses his house in a fire, while the poor man who experiences a similar fate is left with nothing.<sup>29</sup> The paradigm evidently endures. In all manner of Latin literary texts, excellently crafted images – and not least ancient sculptures, wrought by Greek masters – are again conceived of as ornaments, as works that carry a power to adorn their environment. It would even appear that this aesthetic impact on their surrounding space was considered a factor on which the conceptualisation of figural sculptures should rightly be grounded.

There is nothing here of Kant’s valuation of the figural ‘free beauty’ (*pulchritudo vaga*, as he named it) of an autonomous work, over and above that of the merely ‘attendant beauty’ (*pulchritudo adhaerens*) of the ‘ornamented’, and ‘ornamenting’, functional object.<sup>30</sup> On the contrary, it is not the liberated status of these figures from their environment – nor of their beauty from a fundamental function – that is celebrated in Roman contexts, but rather their embeddedness in that environment: what matters is their active impact upon a topographical context. Roman writers valued these major figural works as ornaments to the wider world.

Significantly, this paradigm of figure as ornament is not restricted to Latin literary texts alone. For one thing, we find the same notion attested within epigraphic dedications. So it is, for example, that an inscription from Umbria exploits the language of ornament to celebrate how the patrons ‘adorned the work of the completed theatre in the women’s section with bronze figures (*opus theatri perfect(i) in muliebrib(us) aera-mentis adornaver(unt)*): here again it would seem that statues function as ornaments to the stage.<sup>31</sup> In Ostia, similarly, another inscription commemorates the expense laid out – not for the making of a statue this time, but on its relocation, brought from ‘run-down areas’ (*sordentibus locis*), it is said, for the explicit purpose of becoming ‘an ornament to the forum’ (*ad ornatum fori*).<sup>32</sup> Further afield, at Githgis in the province of Africa, we again read of a bronze statue of the Roman symbol of the wolf (*lupam*

28 Vitr. 1.1.5. On caryatids as simultaneously ‘figurative’ and ‘ornamental’, see Neer’s chapter in this volume (229–234), along with Platt and Squire 2017, 52–56.

29 Juv. 3.217–8: I am following here the widely accepted emendation of Housman, who substitutes *aera* for the *haec* often favoured and attested in several manuscripts at the beginning of line 218.

30 Kant 1790, § 16 of the ‘Analytic of the Beautiful’, in the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment*: see the chapters in this volume by Squire (18–20) and Neer (206–209).

31 An inscription from Nahartium in Umbria: *CIL* 11.04206; Dessau 1892–1916, 05645; *AE* 1997.00484; *AE* 2004.00038. For the suggestion that these bronzes may alternatively be vessels, see Hemelrijk 2015, 106.

32 *AE* 1914.00159.

*aeream*) given to the town as an ornament to the town (*ad ornamentum municipii*).<sup>33</sup> Patrons saw fit to include this notion of ornament in their celebratory inscriptions: they sought to be remembered for providing an ornament to their people.

No less importantly, the same cultural valences that we find in Latin texts are also mirrored in Greek texts of the period – through the analogous Greek concept of *kosmos*. Polybius, for example, claims that the earliest Romans ‘did not adorn their country with external things ... not with ... statues, but with dignity of character and greatness of soul’ (οὐκ ἐκ τῶν ἔξω κοσμεῖται πόλις ... μὴ ... τύποις, ἀλλὰ σεμνότητι καὶ μεγαλοψυχίᾳ κοσμοῦντας αὐτήν), drawing on the dual meaning of the notion of ornament that is here seen to signify both the beautifying impact of figural images and of moral choices.<sup>34</sup> Strabo, similarly, could describe the temple of Olympia as ‘adorned with an abundance of offerings ... among them ... the Zeus of beaten gold, a dedication of Cypselus the king of the Corinthians’ (ἐκοσμήθη δ’ ἐκ τοῦ πλήθους τῶν ἀναθημάτων ... ὧν ἦν ... ὁ χρυσοῦς σφυρήλατος Ζεὺς ἀνάθημα Κυψέλου τοῦ Κορινθίων).<sup>35</sup> He also conceives of an image of a deity – of great material value – as an ornament to a temple. Plutarch, meanwhile, repeatedly discusses valued paintings in terms of ornament. He writes in his *Life of Themistocles*, for example, of how the Athenian general ‘restored the shrine at Phyla, which ... had been burned by the barbarians, at his own expense, and adorned it with paintings’ (τὸ γὰρ Φλυΐσι τελεστήριον, ὅπερ ... ἐμνησθὲν ὑπὸ τῶν βαρβάρων αὐτὸς ἐπεσκεύασε γραφαῖς ἐκόσμησεν).<sup>36</sup> Elsewhere Plutarch describes how ‘Polygnotus was not a mere artisan, and did not paint the stoa for a contract price, but without cost, out of zeal for the welfare of the city [and] ... at his own great expense ... adorned ... the market’ (ὁ δὲ Πολύγνωτος οὐκ ἦν τῶν βαναύσων οὐδ’ ἀπ’ ἐργολαβίας ἔγραφε τὴν στοάν, ἀλλὰ προῖκα, φιλοτιμούμενος πρὸς τὴν πόλιν ... αὐτοῦ γὰρ δαπάναισι ... ἀγοράν ... / ... κόσμης).<sup>37</sup> Indeed, the idea is evoked across the varying cultural contexts of the Roman Empire. For example, Josephus describes how King Agrippa ‘adorned the entire city [of Berytus – Beirut] with donations of statues, and with cast images of the ancients, and transferred almost all the ornament of the kingdom there’ (τὴν πᾶσαν δὲ πόλιν ἀνδριάντων ἀναθέσσειν καὶ ταῖς τῶν ἀρχαίων ἀποτύποις εἰκόσιν ἐκόσμη καὶ μικροῦ δεῖν πάντα τὸν τῆς βασιλείας κόσμον ἐκεῖ μετήνεγκεν) – explicitly including what are presumably stone sculptures alongside those cast in bronze.<sup>38</sup> In both of the dominant languages of the Roman world, then, the concept of ornament proved a popular way of theorising the effect of sculptural works and prized paintings. In both Latin and Greek, it was accepted that a

<sup>33</sup> CIL 8.22699; ILAfr 00016; ILTun 00017; AE 1915.00045.

<sup>34</sup> Polyb. 9.10.1; *tupos* – most literally ‘impression’ – could signify images in general by this period, but especially lent itself to the evocation of works of cast or beaten metal, such as cast bronze statues.

<sup>35</sup> Strab. 8.3.30; for a similar use, see Strab. 8.6.23.

<sup>36</sup> Plut. *Vit. Them.* 1.3.

<sup>37</sup> Plut. *Vit. Cim.* 4.6.

<sup>38</sup> Joseph. *AJ* 20.212–213.



figural sculpture was an ornament.<sup>39</sup> Appearing repeatedly across both the literature and epigraphy of the Roman world, the notion was considered to be commonly instinctive – an idea often employed in discussions of visual culture, in a variety of contexts.

## The dignity of the ‘ornamental’: An absent binary of value

The Roman concept of ornament is striking for its emphasis on, and high valuation of, the external, ornamental, impact of major figural works of statuary and painting. At the same time, the breadth of this term’s application is also important: after all, those images celebrated within the category of Roman ornament – as works dedicated in shrines and defended by generals – are not limited to sculptures and paintings alone. Rather, *ornamenta* refer to a whole gamut of different media.

Consider, once again, the case of Cicero. In his catalogue of Verres’ blunder, Cicero stretches his application of *ornamenta* from sculptures and paintings to images of the kind that Kant would have considered to have only an ‘attendant beauty’. Describing the doors that once bedecked that temple of Minerva from which the panel-paintings were stolen, Cicero asks:<sup>40</sup>

*Iam vero quid ego de valvis illius templi commemorem? vereor ne haec qui non viderunt omnia me nimis augere atque ornare arbitrentur ... confirmare hoc liquido, iudices, possum, valvas magnificentiores ... nullas umquam ullo in templo fuisse. ex ebores diligentissime perfecta argumenta erant in valvis; ea detrahenda curavit omnia ... itaque eius modi valvas reliquit ut quae olim ad ornandum templum erant maxime nunc tantum ad claudendum factae esse videantur.*

But now what shall I say of the folding doors of that temple? I am afraid that those who have not seen these things may think that I am speaking too highly of, and exaggerating everything ... [but] I am able to prove, judges, that no more magnificent doors ... ever existed in any temple. On the folding doors were some subjects most minutely executed in ivory; all these he caused to be taken out ... and so he left the folding doors in such state, that, though they had formerly contributed greatly to the ornament of the temple, they now seemed to have been made only for the purpose of shutting it up.

Cicero demonstrates that the category of works honoured for their ornamenting power stretches well beyond those media which classical art history has primarily prized.

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<sup>39</sup> The Roman notion of ornament arguably here begins to emerge as an example of what philosophers have termed a ‘folk theory’ – a concept ‘embedded in our language’, constituting ‘attempts to understand facts, [and] organize data, that are common knowledge’, as Walton summarises it: see e.g. Walton 2007.

<sup>40</sup> Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.123 (translation based on Yonge’s 1903 Loeb edition).

Miniature ivory inlay, here applied as the decoration of the doors of a temple, could be included in the same conceptual aesthetic paradigm as the portraits of famous kings which those doors guarded. In Roman parlance, famous statues, ancient paintings and doors of delicate workmanship could all alike be valued as ornaments.

Meanwhile, mosaics – though typically works of repeating pattern, commonly sidelined and overlooked in introductions to Roman art – are also celebrated in the Roman world through this same terminology of ornament.<sup>41</sup> Seneca can thus refer to ‘a mosaic layer of colour ... woven all around with ... stones at great effort, its hue varied like that of painting’ (*illis undique operosa et in picturae modum variata circumlitio praetextitur*) as a feature to be expected among the splendours of an ‘ornate bathhouse’ (*balnea ... exornata*) – not, he is clear to state, that he approves of luxury of this kind.<sup>42</sup> Varro similarly lists ‘handsome mosaic floors’ (*pavimentis nobilibus lithostrotis*) among the sources of ornamentation of a well-appointed villa.<sup>43</sup>

Wall-painting – a common domestic Roman medium, which delights in effects of colour and shape – is also variously noted in ancient texts as holding this same adorning power.<sup>44</sup> Thus, Heliodorus, in his third-century AD romantic novel, tells of an inscription of the Ethiopian Queen Persina, which relates how ‘the men who built the royal palaces at various times adorned them with paintings ...; they used to decorate the bedrooms with the love stories of Perseus and Andromeda’ (οἱ δὴ τὰς βασιλείους αὐλὰς κατὰ καιροὺς ἰδρυσάμενοι ταῖς ... γραφαῖς ἐκόσμησαν· τοὺς δὲ θαλάμους τοῖς Ἀνδρομέδας τε καὶ Περσέως ἔρωσιν ἐποίκιλλον).<sup>45</sup> Here, in the private chambers of royalty (rooms that would be recipients of special display), Heliodorus imagines intimate wall-paintings as the valued sources of ornamentation. The Greek doctor Aretaeus also attests to the ornamental power of wall fresco, which could fascinate the viewer for good or ill: in his *Treatment of Acute Diseases*, he recommends that for phrenetics ‘the walls should ... not be adorned with frieze or paintings; for wall-painting is an excitant’ (τοιχοιλεῖοι ... μηδὲ ἄχναις μηδὲ γραφῇσι εὐκοσμοί· ἐρεθιστικὸν γὰρ τοιχογραφίη).<sup>46</sup> Meanwhile, in the Western Empire, two inscriptions from the province of Noricum employ the language of ornament to describe wall-paintings, which are said ‘to adorn’ (*exornare*) the civic space in which they appear.<sup>47</sup> In the use of this

<sup>41</sup> On Roman mosaics, and their interplay of figurative and ornamental forms, see Muth’s chapter in this volume.

<sup>42</sup> Sen. *Ep.* 86.9; for Seneca’s attitudes to *luxuria* (and its opposition to *natura*), see e.g. Gauly 2004.

<sup>43</sup> Varr. *Rust.* 3.1.10.

<sup>44</sup> The literary testimonia cited here play out some of the themes discussed in Platt’s chapter in this volume, discussing the House of the Gilded Cupids in Pompeii (258–273).

<sup>45</sup> Heliod. *Aeth.* 4.8.3.

<sup>46</sup> Aretaeus, *De cur. Morb.* 1.2.

<sup>47</sup> AEA 2001/2002.00117; AEA 2004.00011; AEA 2007.00086; AE 2004.01072: ... *podium /amp(h) itheatri opere tectorio cum / pictura muneris sui exornavit*. See also Wedenig 1997, V.00046; AEA 1993/1998.00352; AEA 1999/2000.00006; AEA 1999/2000.00138; AEA 2001/2002.00007; AEA

language there is no binary of value marked between media: the fanciful frescoes of the Roman world are celebrated as participating in the same sorts of valued ornamental impact as the prized painted panels of the Sicilian temple mentioned above.

The ‘decorative art’ of so-called *Kleinkunst* objects – such as items of furniture and tableware, commonly bedecked with a patterned surface – are also included within this same Roman concept. The point comes to the fore once again in Cicero’s catalogue of Verres’ plunder, in his description of an exceptional candlestick. The *candelabrum*, we are told, was ‘made with amazing skill from the finest gemstones’ (*candelabrum e gemmis clarissimis opere mirabili perfectum*) – and intended by the Syrian kings who commissioned it to serve as a gift for the temple of Jupiter on the Capitol in Rome.<sup>48</sup> It was a piece of such quality, Cicero tells us, that it was clearly intended as ‘an ornament to the grandest temple’ (*ad amplissimi templi ornatum*).<sup>49</sup> Cicero proceeds to ask whether such ‘ornaments of the Capitol should be placed together with those Verres inherited from [the prostitute] Chelidon’ (*cum ceteris Chelidonis hereditariis ornamentis Capitoli ornamenta ponentur*), and whether ‘the ornaments of shrines’ (*ornamenta fanorum*) ought to be ‘included among Verres’ household belongings and furniture’ (*in instrumento atque in supellectile C. Verris nominabuntur*).<sup>50</sup> We see that, for Cicero, a candlestick could evidently be a prized ‘ornament’ to a temple as much as the dedicated images of deities; by applying the same language, Cicero sets a high valuation on the external impact of each.<sup>51</sup>

Pausanias likewise speaks of functional items in similar terms. In the first book of his *Description of Greece*, he adds an approving reference to how the Emperor Hadrian ‘adorned [sanctuaries] with offerings and furniture’ (ἐπεκόσμησεν ἀναθήμασι καὶ κατασκευαῖς), thereby demonstrating that, even for a connoisseur like the author, items of furniture could be considered an important source of ornament in a sanctuary.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, a fascinating (and exceedingly rare) Latin papyrus describes a list of articles included in a dowry in these same terms. Among the list appears the category of ‘bronze ornaments’ (*ornamenta aeraementi*), which transpires to include a frying

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2001/2002.00009; AEA 2001/2002.00039; AEA 2001/2002.00068a; AEA 2003.00027; AEA 2004.00011; AEA 2007.00048; AEA 2008.00036; AEA 2010.00014; AE 1994.01334; AE 1996.01189; AE 1998.01016 (... *Tiberius Claudius Quintilianus ob dedicationem templi tabulam | aeream donum dedit et camaram picturis exornavit*).

<sup>48</sup> Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.64.

<sup>49</sup> Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.65.

<sup>50</sup> Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.97.

<sup>51</sup> For related arguments, see especially the introduction to Lapatin (ed.) 2015. As Lapatin contends, such objects have been wrongly sidelined in our histories of classical art.

<sup>52</sup> Paus. 1.5.5. Examples of Pausanias’ familiarity with the artistic masters of preceding centuries and their works are legion: e.g. Paus. 1.22, 9.4, 10.25–26, 10.28–29 and 10.30–31 (on Polygnotus); 1.14, 1.24, 1.28, 1.33, 1.40, 2.30, 4.33, 5.10–11, 5.14–15, 5.20, 6.4, 6.10, 6.25–26, 7.27, 9.4, 9.10, 9.34 and 10.10 (on Pheidias); 1.2, 3.8, 6.9 and 9.2 (on Simonides).

pan (*sartago*), bowl (*labellum*) and a cup (*scaphium*).<sup>53</sup> Items of kitchen- and tableware are here conceptualised as ornaments – seemingly valued for their powers of adorning the home, as well as (by extension) the bride. Candlesticks, tables, bowls and cups are esteemed for their external impact on their surroundings, in the very same terminology as statues and paintings. Whatever the medium or form, it is consistently the ornamental impact that matters.

For those who doubt that such disparate works could be categorised together in the Roman world, it is worth noting those texts which directly juxtapose the figural and non-figural as equivalent examples of *ornamenta*. In Latin, for example, Livy could speak in one breath of ‘skilled works in silver and bronze, furniture, precious fabrics and many fine statues’ (*argenti aerisque fabrefacti vis, alia supellex pretiosaque vestis et multa nobilia signa*) as being among the ‘ornaments of a long peace and a royal wealth’ (*pacis diuturnae regiaeque opulentiae ornamenta*) found at Syracuse – directly juxtaposing ‘fine statues’ with both ‘furniture’ and ‘precious fabrics’ in his category of ‘ornaments’.<sup>54</sup> To give a Greek example, the Jewish writer Philo employs the terminology of *kosmos* in the same way: he could talk casually of ‘cups, couches, clothes, miniatures and all the other possible things which are an ornament to a house’ (ἐκπώματα, ἐσθῆτες, στρωμαί, ἔπιπλα, τᾶλλα ὅσα οἰκίας κόσμος, ἔκλογα πάντα), neatly demonstrating how tableware and miniature paintings could be grouped together.<sup>55</sup> Turning to epigraphic evidence, too, namely an inscription from Musti in the province of Africa, we find a patron describing himself as having ‘adorned the temple with three marble statues and pictures and had a silver jug and plate made as an ornament (to it)’ (*templum cum statuīs III marmoribus picturis exornavit [item ad] / [or]namentum templi i ... urceum et lancem ex arg(enti) ... fecit*).<sup>56</sup> For this patron, at least, the jug and plate were evidently just as much ‘an ornament of the temple’ (*ornamentum templi*) as the statues and pictures.<sup>57</sup>

Collectively, these examples have a larger significance for approaching the ‘applied arts’ of antiquity. I hope to have demonstrated how door carvings, paintings, mosaics, statues, and items of houseware could all be included as equivalent examples of *ornamenta*. As such, we need to re-think our standard scholarly hierarchies of ancient visual works, grounded in post-Enlightenment aesthetic biases. In the Roman world, at least, these works are celebrated as *ornamenta* because of their role within

<sup>53</sup> ChLA 25.783; PSI 6.730; CPL 207; see also Mallon 1939, 11.16.

<sup>54</sup> Liv. 26.21.7.

<sup>55</sup> Philo, *In. Flacc.* 148.

<sup>56</sup> AE 1968.00586; *IMusti* 00002.

<sup>57</sup> For other examples of a breadth of media and materials being juxtaposed in such a way, see e.g. Philostr. *VA*, 6.11.15; cf. Paus. 1.5.5 (on how the Emperor Hadrian ‘adorned [sanctuaries] with offerings and furniture’ (ἐπεκόσμησεν ἀναθήμασι καὶ κατασκευαῖς)). For an epigraphic parallel, see AE 1928.00082; AE 1947.00135; AE 1954.00258; AE 2006.01578.

a larger environment: the Roman concept of *ornamentum* insists on the applied status of all media.

## Ornament environments: An unlimited status

In the final section of this chapter I want to zoom out still further, demonstrating how the Roman concept of *ornamentum* could be employed to frame the aesthetic effect of not just single works, but also whole built environments. As an opening example, consider how Philo describes the Sebasteion in Alexandria as a building ‘surrounded with statues and pictures and silver and gold encircling it – an exceptionally wide court, provided with porticoes, libraries, men’s quarters, walkways, propylaea, spacious rooms, open-air courtyards, and with everything for expensive ornament’ (γραφαῖς καὶ ἀνδριάσι καὶ ἀργύρῳ καὶ χρυσῷ περιβεβλημένος ἐν κύκλῳ, τέμενος εὐρύτατον στοαῖς, βιβλιοθήκαις, ἀνδρῶσιν, ἄλσεσι, προπυλαίοις, εὐρυχωρίαις, ὑπαίθροις, ἅπασιν τοῖς εἰς πολυτελέστατον κόσμον ἡσκημένον).<sup>58</sup> In this passage, the walkways, propylaea, courtyards and rooms are juxtaposed with the figural media and aesthetic materials as ornaments that impact the wider space of the Sebasteion.<sup>59</sup>

We find that the same thinking recurs in Eusebius’ quotation in his *Praeparatio Evangelica* of Philo’s lost treatise *On Providence*. Within the description of a doctor hurrying through a palace to inspect the ill king, the writer relates that the physician rushes past ‘colonnades, men’s chambers, women’s chambers, pictures, silver, gold (unminted and coined), an abundance of drinking vessels and of tapestries and all the other celebrated ornaments of kings’ (πάνθ’ ὑπερβάντες τὰ περίστωα, τοὺς ἀνδρῶνας, τὰς γυναικωνίτιδας, γραφάς, ἄργυρον, χρυσὸν ἄσημον ἐπίσημον, ἐκπωμάτων, ὑφασμάτων πλῆθος, τὸν ἄλλον τῶν βασιλέων ἀοίδιμον κόσμον).<sup>60</sup> Here, too, full architectural structures like colonnades are directly inserted in a list alongside precious materials and media; each alike belongs implicitly to the category of the ornaments of kings (τὸν ... τῶν βασιλέων ... κόσμον) that Philo evokes.

This idea of buildings themselves amounting to ornaments is not just something found in Greek texts. When Livy relates the destruction that Philip of Macedon wreaked on Achaia, he evokes the buildings of Achaia in similar terms.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Philo, *Leg.* 22.151.

<sup>59</sup> For other instances of similar uses in Philo, see e.g. *De Abrah.* 45 (267); *De decal.* 25 (133); *De cherub.* 29 (99); *De somn.* 2.8 (54).

<sup>60</sup> Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 8.14.174–7; for reflection on the extant excerpts of Philo’s treatise, and the theme of providence in his writing more generally, see Frick 1999.

<sup>61</sup> Liv. 31.26.11–12.

*Templa deum, quae pagatim sacrata habebant, dirui atque incendi iussit; et ornata eo genere operum eximie terra Attica et copia domestici marmoris et ingeniis artificum praeuit huic furori materiam; neque enim diruere modo ipsa templa ac simulacra evertere satis habuit, sed lapides quoque, ne integri cumulerent ruinas, frangi iussit.*

[Philip] ordered that the temples of the gods which had been consecrated in every village should be destroyed and burned; and the land of Attica – exceptionally adorned by this type of construction, along with its wealth of local marble and its craftsmen's skills – offered material for his fury.

In this case, it is the temples themselves, rather than any of the objects within them, that are said to lend beauty to the landscape, and the region of Attica is said to be 'exceptionally adorned' (*ornate ... eximie*) as a result of their effective ornamental presence.<sup>62</sup> The same trope appears again when Livy describes how the general and consul Aemilius Paulus entered the town of Dium, and found the city was 'not large, but so adorned (*ita exornatam*) by public buildings (*publicis locis*)', as well as by 'a whole multitude of statues (*multitudine statuarum*) ... that it was difficult to believe there was no sinister motive behind the abandonment of so much wealth (*tantis rebus*)'.<sup>63</sup> Velleius Paterculus, in his *Historiae Romanae*, could likewise write of how, under Augustus, chief men 'were invited with the encouragement of the Emperor to adorn the city' (*hortatu principis ad ornandam urbem inlecti sunt*) – surely evoking works such as Agrippa's Pantheon and baths, as well as Augustus' wider programme of stimulating public building.<sup>64</sup> Suetonius also picks up the theme, relating that the Emperor Augustus encouraged leading men 'to adorn the city' (*ut ... urbem adornarent*) with buildings.<sup>65</sup> Here we find whole structures being conceptualised as ornaments to the surroundings that they inhabit: ornaments of various media work in union to create an *ornamentum* of still greater ornamental power.

Since mosaics and frescoes, courts and colonnades, and indeed the very buildings they constitute, are all seen to be ornaments alike, the assumed liminal status of ornament simply does not apply to the Roman context. *Ornamenta*, we might say, are not accompaniments to the great artistic and architectural works of ancient Rome, but the constitutive media that produce them, and ultimately, the great works themselves. Ornaments are central: not optional, but necessary. They are the building blocks of the Roman aesthetic environment.

Ultimately, even gardens and cityscapes can be included under the Roman category of *ornamentum*. Josephus, for example, relates that Hyrcanus, when he was

<sup>62</sup> The same usage appears again in relation to Attica at Liv. 31.30.8. Livy describes the island of Bacchium as similarly *exornata*: Liv. 37.21.7, and Cicero applies the same concept to Italy as a whole (*Off.* 2.22.76).

<sup>63</sup> Liv. 44.7.3.

<sup>64</sup> Vell. Pat. 2.89.4.

<sup>65</sup> Suet. Aug. 28.3 (*urbem neque pro maiestate imperii ornata*); 29.4 (*ut ... urbem adornarent*). On this, see Haselberger 2007, esp. 12–17.

founding the city of Tyre, ‘built courts which he extended to a great size and adorned them with very long gardens’ (προσφυκοδόμησε δὲ καὶ αὐλὰς τῷ μεγέθει διαφερούσας καὶ παραδείσοις ἐκόσμησε παμμήκεσι) – with whole parklands operating as the ornament of the city courts here.<sup>66</sup> In his description of the city of Sinope, Strabo similarly describes how ‘the ground ... is adorned with neatly arranged garden plots’ (ὕπερ τῆς πόλεως ... ἐστὶ τὸ ἔδαφος ... ἀγροκηπίοις κεκόσμηται πυκνοῖς), thus describing the gardens of the city as sources of ornament, alongside ‘the gymnasium, market place and colonnades’ (γυμνασίῳ δὲ καὶ ἀγορᾷ καὶ στοαῖς κεκόσμηται), and ‘the sphere of Billarus and the [sculpture of the] Autolycus, the work of Sthenis’ (τὴν δὲ τοῦ Βιλλάρου σφαῖραν ἦρε καὶ τὸν Αὐτόλυκον, Σθένιδος ἔργον) which we are told the Roman general Lucullus took away, although ‘he left the other ornament of the city’ (τὸν μὲν ἄλλον κόσμον τῆς πόλεως διεφύλαξεν) intact.<sup>67</sup> In a somewhat playful reference to an adornment of enormous sheer physical spread, Valerius Maximus can even recount that, in special circumstances, the very paving of a street could constitute a very great, far-spreading ornament (*amplissimo ornamento*).<sup>68</sup> Such references are again indicative of how whole cities could be constituted of ornaments – of works which lent beauty, and so brought a town honour.

In such a city of ornaments, a simple hierarchy in which lesser ornaments always adorn the greater is also rendered anachronistic. Ornaments, ranging from frescoes and statues to buildings, gardens and streets, rather operate in intricate networks of mutual ornamentation. Both ornamenting, and ornamented, their impact may be read as having its effect in multiple directions. Together, they constitute an ornament-scape for the people who lived among them.

The Empire was studded with the ornaments of its built environment: for writers such as Cicero and Livy, individual cities could consequently be praised for being *ornatus*, *exornatus* and *ornatissimus*;<sup>69</sup> similarly, the Greek-speaking citizens of Smyrna repeatedly heralded their city in local inscriptions as ‘the ornament of Ionia’ (κόσμος τῆς Ἰωνίας Σμυρναίων πόλις).<sup>70</sup> Cities were composed of the ornaments of their buildings on the one hand, and also sought to be ornaments in their own right on the other.

<sup>66</sup> Joseph. *AJ* 12.228.

<sup>67</sup> Strab. 12.3.11.

<sup>68</sup> Work inflicted upon the general Epaminondas as a punishment by the people of Thebes: Val. Max. 3.7.ext.5.

<sup>69</sup> See Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.55; 2.1.56; 2.2.4; 2.2.86; 2.4.115; 2.5.127. Cf. also Liv. 26.21.7; 31.30.8; 37.21.7; 38.9.13; 40.5.7; 44.7.3.

<sup>70</sup> See McCabe 1988, 147, 156, 159, 171–172, 191.

## An alternative idea of ornament

My survey of literary sources in this chapter has attempted to reconceptualise what ‘ornament’ was in the Roman world. As I hope to have demonstrated, Roman notions of ornament cover works of all media, forms and scales. In this ancient Roman context, ornament describes a transitive beauty – one that impacts upon the world around it – but in so doing, this beauty is neither considered additional, nor of lesser value. There is no sense in which the ornament of the Roman world skirts the margins of a more important centre. Rather, this transitive, impacting beauty is seen to be effective, powerful, necessary and esteemed. Ornament is vital.

As a result, Roman paradigms must in turn challenge our own perspectives and ideological biases. In the Roman world, at least, there is no straightforward distinction between ornament and figure. In the same vein, we find very different models of value working from the ones that we have inherited from post-Enlightenment aesthetics. The very idea of *parergon*, though ostensibly a Greek term, is Kant’s own invention: it is not a creation of classical antiquity.<sup>71</sup> This is not the lens through which the Romans judged the images they viewed. Likewise, rather than carrying the role of a mere *taxon*, as a lowly subset of visual culture, Roman ‘ornament’ emerges as a valued, chief taxonomical category – a concept under which all Roman visual aesthetic creations – whatever their form, medium or scale – might rightly be grouped. It is the head, not the tail, of classical aesthetic concepts. With the idea of *ornamentum*, we are dealing with a native Roman aesthetic concept, one that bypasses arguments about the relevance of ideas of ‘art’ to the visual culture of classical antiquity; in it, we have an emic aesthetic concept, one that has a cultural quality all of its own.<sup>72</sup> As such, *ornamentum* is a term whose English homonym has belied its great importance.

## Abbreviations

AE	<i>L'année épigraphique: revue des publications épigraphiques relatives à l'antiquité romaine</i> . 1888–, Paris.
AEA	<i>Annona Epigraphica Austriaca</i> . 1979–, Vienna.
ChLA	A. Bruckner, R. Marichal, G. Cavallo and G. Nicolaj (eds.), <i>Chartae Latinae Antiquiores: Facsimile Edition of the Latin Charters</i> . 1954–1998, Olten.

<sup>71</sup> For the different use the term carries where it is once employed in a surviving ancient discussion of a visual image, see Platt and Squire 2017, esp. 46. On *parergia*, cf. also Platt’s chapter in this volume (252–253).

<sup>72</sup> For an introduction to the extended debate on this topic of the relevance of the concept of ‘art’, see initially Kristeller 1951 and Kristeller 1952; see in particular the essays dedicated to *The Art of Art History in Graeco-Roman Antiquity* in Platt and Squire 2010, especially Porter 2010 and Tanner 2010 (in defence of ‘family resemblances’).



- CIL *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*. 1862–, Berlin.  
 CPL R. Cavenaile, *Corpus Papyrorum Latinarum*. 1956–1958, Wiesbaden.  
 D H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*. 1892–1916, Berlin.  
 ILAfr R. A. Cagnat and L. C. Merlin, *Inscriptions Latines d'Afrique (Tripolitaine, Tunisie, Maroc)*. 1923, Paris.  
 ILTun A. Merlin, *Inscriptions Latines de la Tunisie*. 1944, Paris.  
 IMustis A. Beschtaouch, *Mustitana: recueil des nouvelles inscriptions de Mustis, cité romaine de Tunisie*. 1968, Paris.  
 PSI *Papiri Greci e Latini*. 1912, Florence.

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Arne Reinhardt

## ***Delectari varietate: Zur Erklärung der repetitiven Darstellung auf dem ‚Puteal Tegel‘\****

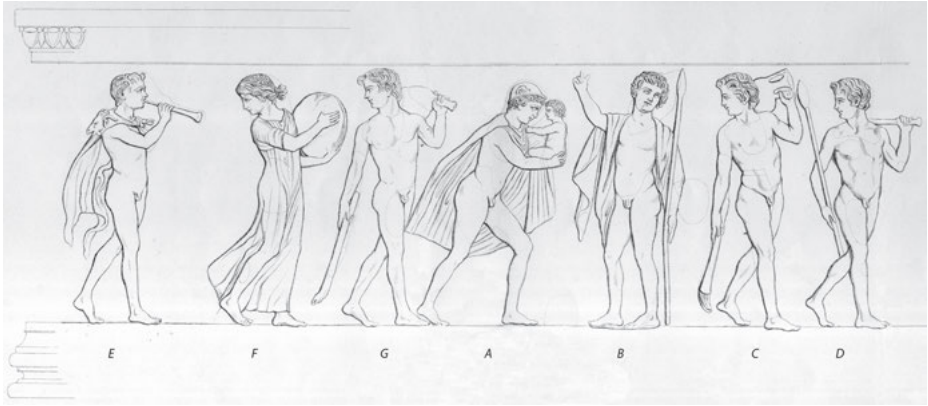
Wenn sich der vorliegende Band mit dem Verhältnis von Ornament und Figur in der Antike beschäftigt, so geschieht dies in dem Bewusstsein, dass die Vorstellungen, die gemeinhin mit beiden Kategorien verbunden werden, nicht objektiv festgelegt, sondern vielmehr diskursabhängig sind – das heißt, sie unterliegen allmählichem Wandel: Man kann ‚Ornament‘ als zusätzlichen Schmuck ohne tieferen Inhalt und ‚Figur‘ als Bedeutungsträger von hohem inhaltlichen Gehalt (‚Bildsprache‘) auffassen, wie häufig geschehen.<sup>1</sup> Inwiefern aber trifft diese Einordnung, die einen nicht zu unterschätzenden hierarchischen Gegensatz zwischen Bildzeichen (Kommunikation) und Beiwerk (als bloß äußerliche Gestaltung, Dekoration) impliziert, auch für andere Epochen und Kulturen zu? In dieser Frage liegt einiges Reflexionspotential für den Umgang mit den begrifflichen Kategorien und Konzepten, mit denen die Kunst- und Kulturwissenschaft ihre Forschungsobjekte zu beschreiben gewohnt ist.

Der vorliegende Beitrag beschäftigt sich vor diesem Hintergrund mit der Erklärung eines auffällig repetitiven Figurenfrieses auf einer ‚neuattischen‘ Brunnenmündung aus Rom (Abb. 11.1), deren Darstellungsweise – dies wird zu zeigen sein – einem in der Entstehungszeit beliebten Gestaltungsprinzip verpflichtet ist. Um die Forschungsgeschichte des Stückes und seiner Kunstrichtung in das übergeordnete Rahmenthema klarer einbetten zu können, wird die eingangs genannte Antithese zwischen Figur/Bild und Ornament erweitert und als Dichotomie von Kunst (Figur/Bild) versus Dekoration (Ornament) aufgefasst. Legitimiert werden kann diese Ausweitung mit der Begründung, dass enge Parallelen in der Konzeption beider Gegensatzpaare bestehen und die genannten Begriffe oft wechselseitig verwendet werden (z. B. ‚Ornamentdekoration‘, ‚Bildkunst‘).

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1 Siehe hierzu in diesem Band Squire, 16–22; Kéi, 143–144; Dietrich, 169–172; Neer, 203–209; Barham.



**Abb. 11.1:** Umzeichnung des Frieses auf dem Puteal Tegel, einer marmornen Brunneneinfassung aus Rom, Mitte des 1. Jh. v. Chr., in Berlin-Tegel, ‚Humboldt-Schlösschen‘ (die eingefügten Buchstaben folgen Golda 1997, 74).

## Hintergrundkonflikt: Kunst versus Dekoration

Wie auch bei anderen Begriffspaaren, die in der Kunstwissenschaft in Gebrauch sind,<sup>2</sup> ist in dem Gegensatz von ‚Figur versus Ornament‘ implizit eine deutliche Hierarchie enthalten: In der Tradition der westlichen Kunstgeschichtsschreibung kann dies entsprechend bedeuten, dass einer figürlichen Darstellung eine größere Wertigkeit zugewiesen wird als etwa der floral-geometrischen Ausarbeitung, die diese umschließt; das ‚Bild‘ gilt als Bedeutungsträger, das ‚Ornament‘ als tendenziell inhaltsleere *Bei-zierde*.<sup>3</sup> Mit dieser hierarchisierenden Absetzung von Figur und Ornament – von Bild und Rahmen – korreliert ein weiterer Gegensatz: der der Kunst mit der Dekoration. ‚Kunst‘, so definierte man in der philosophischen Ästhetik des Klassizismus seit der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jh., ist „das Werk des Genies“ und also einzigartig.<sup>4</sup> Die

<sup>2</sup> Weitere Beispiele sind etwa Original/Kopie: Cupperi 2014, 14–15; Bartsch, Becker und Schreiter 2010, 4. Ornamentträger/Ornament: Grüner 2014, 28–30; Irmischer 2005, 26 und 48; Raulet 2002, 659–661 und 672–673; Kroll 2002, 673. Allgemein zu Hierarchien innerhalb der Künste: Ullrich 2001, 573–576 und 579–581. Siehe in diesem Band Squire, 16–22.

<sup>3</sup> Als Gegensatz zwischen ‚Bild‘ und ‚Rahmen‘ (‚Ergon‘ und ‚Parergon‘) ist diese hierarchische Opposition in der Kunstwissenschaft sprichwörtlich: siehe Dobbe 2012, 318 (Kant und Derrida in Anm. 5), vgl. 320–324 (Riegl); vgl. Spies 2012, 377–379 mit Anm. 1. Zur Ornament-Diskussion siehe auch die weiteren Beiträge bei Beyer und Spies 2012 und Raulet und Schmidt 2001; zu Kants „Zieraten (Parerga)“ siehe Platt und Squire 2017, 38–59. Siehe in diesem Band Squire, 18–20; Neer, 206–209; Platt, 241–242, 252–253.

<sup>4</sup> Gadamer 2010, 99 (Zitat); siehe auch Schaller 2011, 254; Ullrich 2011, 239–240; Raulet 2002, 667 und 672; Häselser 2002, 643–644; Kliche 2000, 335; Squire 2010.

jeweilige Originalität, die an den Schöpfungsakt des Werkes durch einen autonomen Künstler und dessen Genie gebunden ist, bildet dabei im 18. und 19. Jh. das wichtigste Kriterium zur Abgrenzung von ‚Kunst‘ gegenüber anderen Formen der Gestaltung und Produktion.<sup>5</sup>

Demgegenüber wurde ‚Dekoration‘ oder ‚dekorative Kunst‘ als etwas angesehen, das ohne wirklichen Anteil an künstlerischer Einzigartigkeit und Autonomie ist.<sup>6</sup> Entsprechend bildete sich im deutschen Sprachgebrauch des 19. Jh. eine pejorative Bedeutungsfacette des zugehörigen Adjektivs aus, die bis heute üblich ist: Was ‚dekorativ‘ ist, spricht durch sein Äußeres an und schmückt – dabei steht es jedoch häufig in Verdacht, dass es nur „rein äußerlich gut anzusehen“ sei, ohne aber über die schöne Form hinauszugehen.<sup>7</sup> Später, im weiteren Verlauf des 19. Jh. entspricht diesem Gegensatz von zweckfreier ‚Kunst‘ und zweckgebundener ‚Dekoration‘ die Opposition von ‚Kunst‘ und ‚Kunstgewerbe‘ (bzw. von ‚freier‘ und ‚unfreier‘ oder ‚nützlicher Kunst‘ bzw. ‚beaux-arts‘/‚arts décoratifs‘).<sup>8</sup> Charakteristischer Bezugspunkt dieser ‚dekorativen Kunst‘ war das Ornament.<sup>9</sup> Und Ornamente wurden – nun da im 19. Jh. ihre Verwendung jenseits der aus der Rhetoriklehre stammenden neuzeitlichen Tradition und der hiermit verbundenen sozialen Bindungen erfolgte<sup>10</sup> – zum rein schmückenden, aber eben auch entbehrlichen, maskierenden Zusatz (just: ‚Dekoration‘).

## **‚Neuattische‘ Kunst**

Dieses hier kurz zusammengefasste Konzept von Kunst, das die philosophische Ästhetik des 18. Jh. geprägt hat, war von größtem Einfluss auch auf die Klassische Archäologie. Sichtbar wird dies beispielsweise in der Forschungsgeschichte der so genannten neuattischen<sup>11</sup> Kunst, der die gleich näher zu betrachtende Brunnenmün- dung angehört.

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<sup>5</sup> Herles 2011, 231–233; Häsel 2002, 642–653 und 655.

<sup>6</sup> Gadamer 2010, 163–164; vgl. Hirdina 2001, 42 und 48.

<sup>7</sup> Vietze 1999, 178 (Zitat und Wortgebrauch); siehe auch Hirdina 2001, 46 und 48.

<sup>8</sup> Schaller 2011, 254–255; siehe auch Hirdina 2001, 44–46; Ullrich 2001, 586 und 588–593; Kliche 2000, 319–320 und 327–328. Aufschlussreich sind auch die Eingangsdefinitionen in Brockhaus‘ Konversations-Lexikon 10 (1894) 800 s. v. ‚Kunst‘ bzw. 804 s. v. ‚Kunstgewerbe‘.

<sup>9</sup> Vgl. Hirdina 2001, 48; im Laufe der Geschichte der angewandten Kunst (Design) ändert sich diese Einstellung (Hirdina 2001, 49–58).

<sup>10</sup> Zu diesem Wechsel siehe Irmscher 2005, 28 und 48; Raulet 2002, 666–670; Raulet und Schmidt 2001, 7–8, Anm. 1 und 6 (weiterführende Literatur).

<sup>11</sup> Zur Problematik des Begriffs ‚neuattisch‘ siehe die bei Maschek 2008, 189, Anm. 27, gesammelten Verweise.

Im ersten Band seiner ‚Geschichte der Griechischen Künstler‘ (1853) individualisiert H. Brunn eine Reihe von Bildhauererzeugnissen, deren Inschriften er als Signaturen griechischer Künstler unter römischer Herrschaft erkennt.<sup>12</sup> In Absetzung von der klassisch griechischen Kunst Attikas spricht Brunn hierbei von ‚neu-attischer Kunst‘:<sup>13</sup>

[...] durchaus neu und eigenthümlich in der Erfindung erscheinen auch sie [= die neuattischen Figuren, AR] nicht. Sonach bezeichnet auf dem Gebiete des poetisch-künstlerischen Schaffens die neu-attische Kunst nicht einen weiteren Fortschritt in der Entwicklung, sondern sie befindet sich in vollständiger Abhängigkeit von dem, was früher geleistet worden war; Selbstständigkeit und Originalität der Erfindung, wenigstens im höheren Sinne ist nicht mehr vorhanden.

Zwar seien Reliefs von der Art des Salpion, Kleomenes und Sosibios von individuellem Entwurf und auch tadellos ausgearbeitet, jedoch blieben sie den Werken der griechischen Kunst nicht vergleichbar „und verrathen schon in der ganzen Behandlung, dass hier der Zweck einer anmuthigen und gefälligen Decorirung zu überwiegen beginnt“.<sup>14</sup> Das Neuattische: anmutig und schön, jedoch gegenüber den Vorbildern der verwendeten Figurentypen nur Kunst ‚zweiter Hand‘ und demnach im Bereich von Dekoration und Kunstgewerbe zu verorten?

Als Kernaussage durchzieht diese Einschätzung, die den Kunstbegriff der philosophischen Ästhetik deutlich in sich trägt, alle folgenden Arbeiten bis zur partiellen Neubewertung der ‚neuattischen‘ Reliefs durch die Forschung in den 80er und 90er Jahren des 20. Jh. (s. u.).<sup>15</sup> Die Schwerpunkte verlagern sich dabei leicht: So betont etwa F. Hauser, der dieser Materialgruppe als erster eine eigene Abhandlung widmet (1889), explizit den „Werth [...] für die Kunstforschung“;<sup>16</sup> dabei stellt er jedoch hinsichtlich der Wiederholung bekannter Figurentypen auch fest: „[...] in vielen Fällen hat der Künstler nicht einmal eine bestimmte Handlung im Sinne, sondern füllt sein Reliefeld mit Figuren an, wie sie ihm gerade unter die Hand kommen“.<sup>17</sup> Mit den

<sup>12</sup> Zur Forschungsgeschichte siehe Fullerton 1998, 93; Cain 1995; Cain 1985, 2–3.

<sup>13</sup> Brunn 1889 (Erstpublikation 1853), 392, vgl. 392–393 das Beispiel der Venus Medici: Brunn sieht hier die Bildhauer „keineswegs zu blossen Copisten herabgesetzt“, da sie ihre Vorbilder vorteilhaft abwandeln. Hiermit korreliert die Aussage, die ‚neuattische Kunst‘ sei eine „vortreffliche Nachblüthe der schönsten Epoche attischer Kunst“ (Brunn 1889, 398).

<sup>14</sup> Brunn 1889, 398, vgl. 392.

<sup>15</sup> Cain und Dräger 1994, 809. Die Forschungen der letzten vier Jahrzehnte erbrachten eine enorme Weitung des Blickfeldes, indem einerseits aufgezeigt werden konnte, dass das Neuattische keineswegs nur die klassisch-griechische Kunst zum Vorbild hatte; und andererseits indem die neuattischen Erzeugnisse systematisch an ihren antiken Entstehungshintergrund (Käuferschicht, Produktionsbedingungen, Aufstellungskontexte, Funktionen) angeschlossen wurden: siehe Golda 1997, 4; Dräger 1994, 68–70; Cain und Dräger 1994, 811.

<sup>16</sup> Hauser 1889, 2 (Zitat), vgl. 1: Neuattisches sei mehrheitlich „nichts anderes [...], als nach Kräften treue Kopien der alten Meisterwerke“; vgl. 177–178. Zwar spricht Hauser nicht von Dekoration/dekorativer Kunst, aber er betont z. B. die Bedeutung der schönen Linie: Hauser 1889, 174, vgl. 3–4.

<sup>17</sup> Hauser 1889, 2 (Zitat).

Begriffen „dekorative Entwertung“ beziehungsweise „Dekorationsvermögen“ belegt, lebte dieser Vorwurf bis weit ins 20. Jh. fort.<sup>18</sup> Dabei wurde das aus der Kunsttheorie des Klassizismus stammende Gegensatzpaar von ‚Kunst versus Dekoration‘ in der Fachdiskussion entgegen anderen Definitionsmöglichkeiten des Kunstbegriffs auf lange Zeit verstetigt und immer wieder beharrlich auf antike Befunde angewendet. Dies ist auch der Fall bei dem im Folgenden zu besprechenden Figurenfries auf dem ‚Puteal Tegel‘, der eine auffällige dreifache Wiederholung beinhaltet (Abb. 11.1–11.3):

Sollte es einem Künstler [...] nicht möglich gewesen sein, mehr Vorbilder für Satyrgestalten aufzutreiben, als dass er genöthigt ist, in einer Komposition von sieben Figuren einen Typus nicht weniger als dreimal zu wiederholen, indem er nur die Attribute der Figuren variirt, ihr einmal einen Schlauch, dann eine Amphora, endlich einen Stab in die Linke giebt?,

formulierte im letzten Drittel des 19. Jh. provokant Friedrich Hauser.<sup>19</sup> Seine Einschätzung des Figurenfrieses als künstlerisch mangelhaft und anspruchslos wurde von den folgenden Bearbeitern geteilt: Von „neuattische[r] Dutzendwaare“ spricht der Eintrag in den ‚Photographischen Einzelaufnahmen‘ (1925) und auch in der Neubearbeitung der erhaltenen reliefverzierten Marmor-Puteale von Thomas Matthias Golda (1997) findet sich in Hinsicht auf die Komposition und handwerkliche Ausarbeitung eine ähnliche Einschätzung.<sup>20</sup> Trifft aber diese Argumentation auf Ebene der künstlerischen Qualität des Frieses und seiner Bildhauer – die letztlich unterschwellig dem nicht-antiken Maßstab der klassizistischen Kunsttheorie folgt und implizit nach Genie und Einzigartigkeit verlangt – das Richtige?

Wie ich im Folgenden zeigen möchte, bietet sich eine andere Lösung an, die nicht schwer überprüfbare ‚praktische‘ Gründe (mangelnde Fähigkeiten, fehlende Vorlagen) zur Erklärung des *status quo* anführen muss. Hierfür gilt es Parallelen für die repetitiv-variiierende Darstellungsweise des Frieses aufzuzeigen und durch Vergleiche an übergeordnete Geschmacksvorstellungen der Entstehungszeit anzuknüpfen.

## Das ‚Puteal Tegel‘

Die angesprochene marmorne Brunnenfassung aus der Mitte des 1. Jh. v. Chr. befindet sich im Vestibül des ‚Humboldt-Schlösschens‘ in Berlin Tegel. Zuvor vermauert im Hof von S. Calisto in Rom, erwarb Caroline von Humboldt das Puteal 1809 von den dorti-

<sup>18</sup> Besonders eindringlich: Fuchs 1959, 5, 20 und 193–197.

<sup>19</sup> Hauser 1889, 31–32 (das Negativurteil der dreifachen Typen-Wiederholung bleibt unberührt von Hausers im Nachtrag auf S. 200 geübten Relativierung seiner Kritik an der Proportionierung und Ausarbeitung der Figuren).

<sup>20</sup> Amelung 1925, 92 (Zitat); Golda 1997, 74–75, Nr. 3, vgl. S. 23 und 95–96, Nr. 38, Beil. 10.



**Abb. 11.2:** Satyr mit tänzelnder Schrittstellung und tordiertem Oberkörper (G) zwischen Tympanistra (F) und Hermes (A) auf dem Puteal Tegel (wie Abb. 11.1).

gen Benediktiner-Mönchen; vor seiner neuen Aufstellung wurden Teile des an vielen Stellen lädierten Relieffrieses zuerst in Gips, dann in Marmor ergänzt und das Stück mit einer erklärenden lateinischen Inschrift versehen.<sup>21</sup>

Die Außenseite des knapp einen Meter hohen, innen hohlen Zylinders aus weißem Marmor ist mit sorgfältig ausgearbeiteten Profilen geschmückt, die das Puteal nach unten (Torus-Trochilus-Torus, Kyma) und oben (Kehle, Eierstab, Perlstab) abschließen. Diese Profile bildeten zugleich die Rahmung für ein großes Mittelfeld, das einen Zug von sieben Figuren zeigt, der das Puteal entgegen dem Uhrzeigersinn umzieht (Abb. 11.1):

Von links nach rechts finden sich ein Flöte spielender Satyr mit Raubtierfell, eine nach hinten blickende, lang gewandete Bacchantin mit Tympanon, ein sich umblickender Satyr mit gesenkter Fackel und geschultertem Weinschlauch, Hermes mit Mantel und Flügelkappe, der das Dionysos-Kind trägt, sowie ein diesem gegenüber stehender Satyr mit Thyrsos und erhobener rechter Hand; es folgt ein sich umbli-

<sup>21</sup> Golda 1997, 74, Nr. 3; Heinz und Heinz 2001, 28–29, Abb. 6 (Aufstellungsort); Mattson 1990, 327–328 und 577–578, Nr. 145–146 (Inschrift).





**Abb. 11.3:** Zwei weitere Satyrn mit tänzelnder Schrittstellung und tordiertem Oberkörper (C, D) auf dem Puteal Tegel (wie Abb. 11.1) links der schnippende Satyr (B).

ckender Satyr mit gesenkter Fackel und geschulterter Amphora und ein weiterer sich umblickender Satyr, der in der gesenkten rechten Hand einen Thyrsos trägt und links einen weiteren Gegenstand geschulter hat.<sup>22</sup> Durch die sorgsam gestaffelten Figurenabstände<sup>23</sup> und den entgegen der Zugrichtung stehenden Satyrn mit Thyrsos<sup>24</sup> werden

<sup>22</sup> Golda 1997, 74, Nr. 3. Bei dem nicht identifizierten Attribut handelt es sich um einen länglichen Gegenstand runden Querschnitts ohne auffällige Textur, Verdickung o. Ä.: Hauser 1889, 32 (Stab); Heydemann 1885, 27 (Flöte oder Fackel?); da der antike Reliefhintergrund neben dem ergänzten Kopf des Satyrn keinerlei Auffälligkeiten aufweist, war der Gegenstand ursprünglich wohl nur zur Hälfte skulptiert worden (und der Rest dann u. U. in der Bemalung angegeben).

<sup>23</sup> Während sich die Figuren G und A (Bezeichnung nach Golda 1997, 74, Nr. 3) an den Füßen sogar berühren und zwischen den Füßen von C und D auf Höhe der Bodenlinie ein Abstand von nur ca. 6 cm besteht, liegen zwischen den Füßen der Figuren F–G, A–B und B–C jeweils 10–17 cm. Der Satyr mit der Aulos (Figur E) wird durch größere Abstände (D–E: 23 cm; E–F: 18 cm) deutlich abgesetzt und fungiert als zweite kompositorische Mitte auf der der Hauptgruppe gegenüberliegenden Puteal-Seite (anders beispielsweise die Komposition der Figuren auf dem Salpion-Krater, die ‚zentristisch‘ auf die Übergabe des Dionysos-Kindes ausgerichtet sind: Grassinger 1991, 176, Nr. 19, Textabb. 21).

<sup>24</sup> Nach Heydemann 1885, 27 vollführt dieser Satyr mit der erhobenen Rechten ein Schnippchen, was eine Hervorhebung der Hauptfiguren auf inhaltlicher Ebene bedeutet.

der Hermes und das Dionysos-Kind kompositorisch als die Hauptfiguren des Frieses markiert, eine Hervorhebung, die ihrer inhaltlichen Bedeutung entspricht.

## a) Thema und Darstellung

Ikongraphie und Inhalt des Figurenfrieses sind gut deutbar: Dargestellt ist die Überbringung des kleinen Dionysos durch den Götterboten Hermes, wobei jedoch nicht Ausgangs- oder Endpunkt dieser bekannten Episode aus der Mythologie zu Geburt und Kindheit des Dionysos thematisiert werden;<sup>25</sup> dargestellt ist allein die Handlung des Überbringens – im Fries des Puteals umgesetzt als dionysischer Zug mit fünf Satyrn und einer Mänade, die mit ihren Handlungen und Attributen Musik, Weingenuss und Tanz vor Augen führen. Ein repetitives Moment des Frieses bedient hierbei (von den oben zitierten Negativurteilen unbeachtet)<sup>26</sup> eine verbreitete ikonographische Konvention: Die Wiederholung eines einheitlichen Schrittmotivs, wie es vier der fünf Satyrn des Frieses – und dabei alle nach rechts schreitenden (Abb. 11.1) – aufweisen, ist ein gängiges Gestaltungsmittel in Darstellungen von Reigen, Tanz oder Prozessionen.<sup>27</sup>

Ähnliche dionysische Züge wie auf dem Fries des ‚Puteal Tegel‘ sind auf einer Vielzahl anderer Reliefs und Reliefobjekte aus Marmor vorhanden, die in der späten römischen Republik oder Kaiserzeit entstanden sind.<sup>28</sup> Dies trifft auch auf die Figuren selbst zu, denn diese entsprechen allesamt bekannten Typen: So findet sich beispiels-

<sup>25</sup> Für Darstellungen von Dionysos' Geburt aus dem Schenkel des Zeus bzw. seiner Übergabe an die Nymphen siehe Gasparri 1986, 551–552, Nr. 127–148; Touchette 1995, 28–29, Abb. 54a–b.

<sup>26</sup> Zu nennen ist hier auch die Ausarbeitung des Hermes mit dem rechten Bein im Profil (und nicht in Dreiviertelansicht wie bei den Figurenrepliken): In Analogie zu den übrigen Figuren des Frieses – alle Beine sind im Profil dargestellt – muss auch hier eine gezielte Angleichung an die für das Puteal gewählte Schrittmotiv vorliegen; ein belastbares Indiz für „das mangelnde Können des Bildhauers“ (Golda 1997, 45, Hermes 1b [Zitat]) wäre somit nicht gegeben. Für eine ähnliche Anpassung der Schrittmotivik siehe die unten zu besprechende Kandelaber-Basis in Berlin (Abb. 11.4–11.6).

<sup>27</sup> Vgl. hierzu beispielsweise die Darstellungen dreier Nymphen (Stephanidou-Tiveriou 1979, 94–98, Taf. 27; Touchette 1995, 24, Abb. 53a; 47, Abb. 55b: die beiden rechten Figuren) oder der vier Götter Hephaistos, Athena, Apoll und Artemis (Huet und Lissarrague 2006, 181–182, Abb. 2–3; Fullerton 1998, 94, Abb. 2: alle vier Figuren); oder in dionysischem Kontext: Sinn 2006, 104–106, Nr. 24, Taf. 25.1 (linke Figur und die zweite von rechts); Dräger 1994, 194–195, Nr. 16 (vgl. S. 102–111), Taf. 11: die drei nach links schreitenden Manteltänzerinnen und zwei der Kureten); 264–265, Nr. 115, Taf. 16: alle drei Figuren). Wiederholungen nicht nur des Schrittmotivs, sondern des ganzen Figurentypus sind in Darstellungen der so genannten Kureten anzutreffen (Habetzeder 2012, 23–27 mit Abb. 18–19 und 23) oder auch auf einer Rund-Ara in Rom (Schneider 1992, 61–65, Nr. 267, Abb. 1, Taf. 33–40), deren Fries fünf Figuren mit *tropaea* zeigt (der antike Kern der heute in Ergänzung vorliegenden Schrittstellung ergibt sich aus der analogen Position der erhaltenen linken Füße/Beine).

<sup>28</sup> Siehe etwa Golda 1997, 52–59 und 66; Dräger 1994, 96–107; Grassinger 1991, 149–150; Cain 1985, 98, 123–131 und 138.

weise auf einem wenig jüngeren Puteal in Rom (Vatikan, Galleria dei Candelabri, Inv. 2576) der Hermes mit dem Dionysos-Kind wieder<sup>29</sup> und auf Campana-Reliefs erscheint die gleiche Kombination aus der links gerichteten Figur mit erhobener rechter Hand (dort ist es Dionysos) und dem sich rechts anschließenden umblickenden Satyrn mit gesenkter Fackel und geschulterter Amphora (vgl. Abb. 11.3).<sup>30</sup> Das *Dargestellte*<sup>31</sup> – gemeint sind Thema und Figuren des Frieses – lässt sich somit insgesamt sehr gut einordnen.

Anders verhält es sich scheinbar auf Ebene der *Darstellung* – also hinsichtlich der Art und Weise, wie der Zug der sieben Figuren konzipiert und bildlich umgesetzt wurde. In Konflikt mit dem aus der philosophischen Ästhetik des Klassizismus stammenden Konzept der Einzigartigkeit von Kunst treten hier die drei gleichartigen Satyrfiguren, die auch jenseits ihrer Schrittstellung (s. o.) durch die analoge Haltungsmotivik auffallen: Ihre tordierte Stellung des Oberkörpers, der zurückgewendete Kopf sowie die gesenkte rechte und die zur Schulter geführte linke Hand stimmen fast genau überein; kleine Abweichungen ergeben sich nur in den Maßen und der genauen Position der Arme (Neigungswinkel)<sup>32</sup> sowie dann untergeordnet bei den Attributen (Abb. 11.2–11.3).<sup>33</sup> Dass alle drei Satyrn durch Abwandlung einer Einzelfigur entstanden sein dürften, erscheint – wie von der Forschung vermutet – plausibel. Alles in allem griffen somit die uns unbekannten Bildhauer bei der Ausgestaltung des Frieses nicht nur auf mehrere Vorlagen zurück, wie die Figurenreplik in anderen Reliefs vermuten lassen,<sup>34</sup> sondern sie nutzen diese auch unterschiedlich intensiv.

<sup>29</sup> Golda 1997, 97, Nr. 41, Taf. 44, 1; Grassinger 1991, 90; vgl. unten Anm. 30.

<sup>30</sup> Golda 1997, 54, Anm. 354 (Satyr 4a); 55–56 (Satyr 10); Rauch 1999, 21–25 und 148–150, Taf. 2, Nr. 54.

<sup>31</sup> Die Unterscheidung von ‚Dargestelltem‘ und ‚Darstellung‘ (siehe etwa auch Gadamer 2010, 142–144) wurde in den Diskussionen des Workshops wiederholt mit Gewinn auf die Dichotomie von ‚Figur‘ und ‚Ornament‘ angewendet. Für die vorliegende Untersuchung ist sie relevant, da hierdurch der antiken Arbeitsweise im Umgang mit den verwendeten Figurentypen methodisch sehr gut entsprochen werden kann: Die im Profil gezeigten Beine der nach rechts gewendeten Figuren auf dem ‚Puteal Tegel‘ sind offensichtlich ebenso Ausdruck einer durch die Bildhauer des Puteals vorgenommenen Angleichung wie bei der analogen Schrittmotivik auf der Berliner Kandelaberbasis (Abb. 11.4–11.6 – vgl. unten, 310–311); mit dem Begriff der ‚Darstellung‘ kann dies als intendierte Modifikation neutral beschrieben werden, ohne dass hierdurch beispielsweise ein Mangel gegenüber der Typus-Tradition impliziert würde (siehe oben Anm. 26).

<sup>32</sup> Die Figurenhöhe beträgt zweimal 0,58 m, einmal 0,60 m; solch kleine Abweichungen von ca. 2 cm sind z. B. auch bei der Schulterbreite vorhanden. Die leicht variierte Position des rechten Armes wird beim Abstand von Ellenbogen und Bodenlinie deutlich: 0,42 m (C), 0,36 m (D), 0,43 m (G – die Figurenbezeichnungen folgen Golda 1997, 74).

<sup>33</sup> Vgl. Golda 1997, 54 (Satyr 4a–c) und 74, Nr. 3. Inwieweit sich die drei Figuren ursprünglich vielleicht auch im Bereich der Köpfe unterschieden haben könnten, ist heute nicht mehr ermittelbar, da jene, Teile der Oberkörper und einzelne Stellen an Gliedmaßen und Attributen heute ergänzt sind: Golda 1997, 74, Nr. 3.

<sup>34</sup> Zu den bereits erwähnten Campana-Reliefs siehe Rauch 1999, 21–25, die plausibel macht, dass eine Abhängigkeit des Puteals von diesen (Golda 1997, 74) nicht sicher zu behaupten ist. Der Hermes

## b) Stellung innerhalb der erhaltenen Puteale

In typologischer Hinsicht – dies gilt es kurz einzuwerfen – bewegt sich das ‚Puteal Tegel‘ im Bereich der *putealia sigillata* des 1. Jh. v. Chr., bei denen es sich um ein teures Luxusgut gehandelt haben muss.<sup>35</sup> Denn dieser Gruppe von Marmorputealen mit sorgfältig gestalteten Abschlussprofilen und figürlichen Friesen lässt sich entgegenstellen, dass die im Zeitraum vom 2. Jh. v. bis zum frühen 3. Jh. n. Chr. zahlreich gefertigten Puteale häufig in einer sehr viel schlichteren Ausführung aus Terrakotta oder lokalem Gestein vorliegen, verziert nur mit Abschlussprofilen sowie beispielsweise einem Metopen-Triglyphen-Fries, mit Girlanden und/oder Riefeln.<sup>36</sup> Allein unter den Gesichtspunkten von Material und Ausgestaltung betrachtet (und unabhängig von der Beurteilung der ausgearbeiteten Relieffiguren) ist das ‚Tegeler Puteal‘ sicher dieser anspruchsvollen Gruppe prestigeträchtiger Marmorausstattungsstücke zuzurechnen. Dies mag als Aufmunterung zu einer positiven Interpretation des repetitiven Figurenfrieses verstanden werden – nicht nach modernen klassizistischen Maßstäben, wohl aber in Übereinstimmung mit vergleichbaren Gestaltungsstrategien aus der Entstehungszeit des ‚Puteal Tegel‘.

## Das repetitive Moment als gesuchter Effekt – Evidenz durch Vergleichsfälle

Den Ausschlag, von einer negativen Beurteilung der Repetition im Figurenfries auf dem ‚Tegeler Puteal‘ Abstand zu nehmen, geben in erster Linie aussagekräftige Vergleichsfälle, in denen sich die gezielte Wiederholung von Bildelementen und ihre gleichzeitige punktuelle Abwandlung als Intention zu erkennen gibt. Entsprechenden Beispiele finden sich unter anderen reliefgeschmückten Marmorobjekten des römischen Ausstattungsluxus, entstammen also derselben Sphäre prestigeträchtiger Bildhauererzeugnisse, der auch das ‚Puteal Tegel‘ angehört.

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mit dem Dionysos-Kind findet sich – auf eine sitzende Nymphe (Nysa) zuschreitend – auf dem Krater des Salpion, einem Puteal im Vatikan und einem Piräus-Relief: Golda 1997, 48 (Nymphe 1) mit Literaturverweisen, vgl. Touchette 1995, 28–29; Stephanidou-Tiveriou 1979, 101–104, Taf. 35. Links neben dem Hermes auf dem Salpion-Krater erscheint zudem der Typus des Satyrn mit der Diaulos, von dem der flötenspielende Satyr auf dem Tegeler Puteal abhängt: vgl. Grassinger 1991, 83, 89 und 176–177, Nr. 19, Textabb. 21 (Figur F); Golda 1997, 55 (Satyr 7b und Satyr 7a – dieser Typus wurde häufig zusammen mit der Mänade mit dem Tympanon verwendet). Alles in allem sind jedoch keine sicheren Aussagen in Hinsicht auf den Umfang (Einzelfiguren, ganze Kompositionen?) der für das ‚Tegeler Puteal‘ verwendeten Vorlagen möglich.

<sup>35</sup> Golda 1997, 1 und 19–20.

<sup>36</sup> Golda 1997, 19, 24 und 114–127.

Bei einem Blick auf das publizierte Material, das in den letzten 35 Jahren von der archäologischen Forschung eingehend untersucht und gut bebildert vorgelegt worden ist,<sup>37</sup> fallen zwei Dimensionen des Wiederholens und Abwandeln gleichartiger Figuren auf: 1) innerhalb eines zusammenhängenden Bildfeldes oder aber zwischen den einzelnen Bildfeldern desselben (dann mehrseitigen) Bildträgers; 2) zwischen mehreren Bildträgern, die miteinander kombiniert in einem einheitlichen Aufstellungszusammenhang Verwendung fanden.

Als Beispiel für den ersten Fall kann der claudische Jahreszeiten Altar in Würzburg (Martin-von-Wagner-Museum Inv. H 5056) genannt werden.<sup>38</sup> Der umlaufende Fries zeigt vier einander sehr ähnliche Eroten mit Jahreszeiten-Attributen im Wechsel mit Balustersäulen. Durch eine spiegelbildliche Wiederholung des ponderierten Standmotives wurden die gleichartig aufgebauten Figuren zu je zwei Paaren zusammengefasst (die Eroten für Sommer/Herbst bzw. für Winter/Frühling); ihre paarweise Zusammengehörigkeit innerhalb der repetitiven Bildkomposition unterstreichen ferner die antithetischen Kopfwendungen sowie die beiden *parapetasmata* an den Balustersäulen, so dass das Erscheinungsbild des Frieses insgesamt zwischen Gleichartigkeit und Differenzierung oszilliert – Ergebnis ist eine Auflockerung und Rhythmisierung des homogen strukturierten Bildraumes.<sup>39</sup>

Weitere Beispiele existieren zahlreich unter den römischen Kandelaberbasen aus Marmor, deren charakteristische Gestaltungsprinzipien Hans-Ulrich Cain herausgearbeitet hat: Durch Abwandlung von Motiven und Attributen glich man die für die Bildfelder der dreiseitigen Basen gewählten Figurentypen einander an oder differenzierte sie eigens, was insgesamt zu einem großen Variationsspektrum der verwendeten Haltungsmotive führte.<sup>40</sup>

Ein den Figuren auf dem ‚Puteal Tegel‘ besonders nahestehendes und dabei nur wenig jüngeres Beispiel liegt in einer Kandelaberbasis in Berlin vor (Staatliche Museen, Antikensammlung Inv. Sk 1055): Die Satyrn in den drei Relieffeldern weisen untereinander wie auch im Vergleich zum Puteal eine eng verwandte Schrittstellung und ähnlich zurückgewendete Oberkörper auf (Abb. 11.4–11.6). In der Haltung der Köpfe und Arme sowie in den Attributen unterscheiden sich die drei Figuren

<sup>37</sup> Ich beziehe mich hier vor allem auf die Marmorkandelaber (Cain 1985) als Vergleichsgruppe. Im Rahmen von Serienstücken lässt sich Ähnliches jedoch auch unter den marmornen Puteale, Aren und Gefäßen (Golda 1997; Dräger 1994; Grassinger 1991) aufzeigen; hierzu demnächst die Dissertation des Verfassers.

<sup>38</sup> Sinn 2001 mit Literatur.

<sup>39</sup> Siehe Simon 1967, 5–8, Abb. 4, 5 und 9–11. Einige der formalen Abweichungen betreffen auch die inhaltliche Ebene: So kennzeichnet eine Tunika den Winter, eine Nebris den Herbst, während Frühling und Sommer jeweils ein Manteltuch in der linken Armbeuge tragen: Simon 1967, 6–7.

<sup>40</sup> Cain 1985, 99, 138–139 und 145. Als Beispiel mögen etwa die sorgfältig aufeinander bezogenen Götterfiguren auf einem Kandelaber-Paar aus der Villa Adriana dienen: Cain 1985, 103–104 (Ares 2) und 140; Söldner 2010, 270–272.



**Abb. 11.4:** Satyr mit *cista* und Raubtier auf einer marmornen Kandelaberbasis aus Italien (ehemals Sammlung Grimani), zweite Hälfte des 1. Jh. v. Chr., in Berlin, Staatliche Museen Antikensammlung.



**Abb. 11.5:** Satyr mit zwei Flöten und analogem Schrittmotiv auf der Kandelaberbasis in Berlin (wie Abb. 11.4).

jedoch sehr viel mehr als die Satyrn auf dem ‚Tegeler Puteal‘ (Abb. 11.1–11.3):<sup>41</sup> Ihre spezifischen Armhaltungen, Kopfwendungen und Attribute sind drei eigenständigen Satyrtypen verhaftet (zwei von diesen werden in zahlreichen Wiederholungen überliefert),<sup>42</sup> so dass die parallele Schrittmotivik und Oberkörpertorsion wohl als Ergebnis einer gezielten Angleichung aufzufassen ist. Wie auch immer diese Ausbildung der motivischen Ähnlichkeiten bei den Figuren auf der Kandelaberbasis (vermutete Angleichung) und beim ‚Puteal Tegel‘ (vermutete Abwandlung) im Einzelnen durchgeführt worden sein mag, ist jedoch für die vorliegende Betrachtung letztlich zweitrangig; denn aus beiden möglichen Vorgehensweisen resultiert derselbe ästhetische Effekt, den man augenscheinlich gezielt provoziert hat – im formalen Erscheinungsbild sowohl der Kandelaberbasis wie auch des Würzburger Jahreszeitenaltares

<sup>41</sup> Cain 1985, 126 (Satyr 9b) und 150, Nr. 3; Reinhardt 2013.

<sup>42</sup> Siehe Cain 1985, 124–126, Beilage 9–10 (Satyrn 2b, 5c und 9b). Vgl. Grassinger 1991, 89–90.



**Abb. 11.6:** Satyr mit Trauben und springendem Raubtierweibchen in identischem Schrittmotiv auf der Kandelaberbasis in Berlin (wie Abb. 11.4).

und des ‚Tegeler Puteals‘: Ein formal aufgeladenes, rhythmisierendes Nebeneinander von wiederholten und abgewandelten Bildelementen, innerhalb dessen die ausgearbeiteten Figuren stets neu im Spannungsfeld zwischen kollektiver Einheitlichkeit und individuellem Erscheinungsbild verortet werden konnten.<sup>43</sup>

Diesen Effekt zeigt auch eine Serie von sechs julisch-claudischen Kandelaberbasen in Rom, die neuzeitlich in S. Agnese fuori le mura beziehungsweise S. Costanza wiederverwendet worden sind.<sup>44</sup> Sie darf als Paradebeispiel für den zweiten Fall gelten, bei dem sich das Nebeneinander von wiederholten und abgewandelten Bild-

<sup>43</sup> Hierbei konnten auch inhaltliche oder semantische Aspekte ausschlaggebend sein – vgl. den ikonographisch relevanten Aspekt repetitiver Schrittmotivik (oben Anm. 27).

<sup>44</sup> Rom, Villa Borghese Inv. CVI. S. Agnese fuori le mura. Vatikan, Galleria dei Candelabri Inv. 2482, Inv. 2487, Inv. 2564 und Inv. 2566: Cain 1985, 75–77, 174, Nr. 72; 182–183, Nr. 93; 184–187, Nr. 99–102, Beilage 6, Taf. 37–43 und 80–82. Zur Basis in Villa Borghese siehe auch Moreno und Viacava 2003, 188, Nr. 166 mit neuzeitlicher Datierung (diese nach Ansicht des Verf. nicht zutreffend, u. A. da dieselben



**Abb. 11.7:** Marmorkandelaber mit Balusterschaft, Teil einer Serie von sechs Stücken aus Rom, julisch-claudische Zeit, Vatikanische Museen, Galleria dei Candelabri.

**Abb. 11.8:** Marmorkandelaber mit Akanthus-Phialen-Schaft, Teil einer Serie von sechs Stücken aus Rom, julisch-claudische Zeit, Vatikanische Museen, Galleria dei Candelabri.

elementen auch in der Kombination mehrerer einheitlich entstandener Ausstattungsstücke innerhalb eines gemeinsamen Aufstellungszusammenhangs entfaltet. Kern des im Fall dieser Kandelaber zu beobachtenden Spiels aus Wiederholung und Abwandlung ist die Figur eines Eros mit vegetabilem Unterkörper (möglicherweise eigens für diese Serie entworfen)<sup>45</sup> zwischen stehenden S-Spiralen, der sich in den 18 Bildfeldern der Kandelaber in insgesamt sechs Varianten findet (Abb. 11.9–11.10): Das zugrunde liegende Schema wurde dabei wie folgt variiert: hinsichtlich der Kopfwendung, der Ausrichtung der Oberkörper nach links oder rechts sowie der dargestellten Handlungen (Tragen und Präsentieren von Gegenständen bzw. Anlegen einer Binde) und der beigegebenen Attribute (Fruchtkorb, Füllhorn, *pedum*, Vogel,

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technischen Details vorhanden sind wie bei den anderen Basen [z. B. bislang nicht berücksichtigte Messpunkte an den Kanten]).

<sup>45</sup> Cain 1985, 110.



Trauben).<sup>46</sup> Ferner erscheinen die Erogen in unterschiedlicher Kombination und Häufigkeit (einer wird sogar spiegelbildlich wiederholt).<sup>47</sup> Hierdurch wurde komplementär zu den homogen gestalteten Ornamentabschnitten und Deckplatten der Kandelaberbasen ein beständiges Moment der Abwechslung geschaffen, das innerhalb der Serie noch an zwei weiteren Stellen evoziert wurde: Einerseits durch die Verwendung zweier unterschiedlicher Schafttypen (Akanthus-Phialen- bzw. Balusterschaft), die das Erscheinungsbild der gemeinsam aufgestellten Kandelabergruppe deutlich beeinflussen (Abb. 11.7–11.8); und andererseits durch die subtile Variation des Blütenmotivs in den S-Spiralen der Rankeneroten: In einigen der Relieffelder werden die Blüten – unter Beibehaltung der gewohnten Zahl der Blütenblätter wie auch der Maße – abweichend von hinten dargestellt (Abb. 11.9–11.10);<sup>48</sup> eine verblüffende, parodistisch anmutende Abwandlung, deren sorgfältige Ausführung nur bei sehr genauer Betrachtung auffällt. Der konzeptionelle Aufwand, der bei der Ausarbeitung der Kandelaber-Serie insgesamt in Kauf genommen wurde, ist hoch – und erscheint nur dann plausibel erklärbar, wenn er als auf Intention beruhend und als ein gewünschtes Ziel der Auftraggeber und Bildhauer aufgefasst wird. Auch hier gehen Repetition und Abwandlung Hand in Hand: Wiederholung gab Anlass zu Variation – und darin lag in den vorliegenden Fällen augenscheinlich ein großes Interesse der beteiligten Akteure (Bildhauer wie Auftraggeber).<sup>49</sup>

## Repetition als Ausgangspunkt für *variatio* – Kontextualisierung

Auf den Kandelaberbasen in Rom und Berlin sowie auf dem Jahreszeitenaltar in Würzburg ist eine Darstellungsweise zu beobachten, der die des ‚Puteal Tegel‘ konzeptionell sehr ähnelt. Bei allen diesen Reliefobjekten aus dem Zeitraum von der

<sup>46</sup> Cain 1985, 109–110, Beilage 6. Vier der Rankeneroten fallen dabei durch eine sehr ähnliche Armhaltung auf (der rechte Arm schräg nach oben ausgestreckt, der linken bis auf Hüft- oder Taillenhöhe herabgenommen), vgl. Cain 1985, 109, Beilage 6 (Rankeneros 2–5 gegenüber Rankeneros 1 und 6).

<sup>47</sup> Am häufigsten treten Rankeneros 1 und 6 auf (in 11 der 18 Bildfelder); demgegenüber erscheint Rankeneros 3 dreimal, Rankeneros 4 zweimal und die Rankeneroten 2 und 5 sogar nur einmal: vgl. Cain 1985, 174, Nr. 72; 182, Nr. 93; 184, Nr. 99; 186–187, Nr. 100–102.

<sup>48</sup> Betroffen sind einzelne Seiten der Basen Vatikanische Museen, Galleria dei Candelabri Inv. 2487, Inv. 2566 und Inv. 2564. Wie meine Überprüfung der Basen erbrachte (ich danke herzlich G. Spinola für die Möglichkeit einer Autopsie), korrespondieren diese variierten Blüten nicht mit den jeweils dargestellten Rankeneroten; auch sind nicht alle Seiten einer Basis betroffen (bei Inv. 2055 tritt es bspw. in nur einem Relieffeld auf) – vgl. die Abbildungen bei Cain 1985, Taf. 39.4 (Nr. 100); 40.3 (Nr. 102); 40.2 und 40.4 (Nr. 101), sowie Taf. 81.3 und 82.3.

<sup>49</sup> Was dabei im Einzelnen von welcher Seite eingebracht worden sein mag, ist heute nicht mehr nachvollziehbar: Cain 1985, 99.



**Abb. 11.9:** Rankeneros mit Füllhorn zwischen S-Spiralen mit Blüten en face, Detail derselben Kandelaber-Serie, Basis in den Vatikanischen Museen, Galleria dei Candelabri.

zweiten Hälfte des 1. Jh. v. bis zur ersten Hälfte des 1. Jh. n. Chr. treten Wiederholungen von Figurentypen und Haltungsmotiven innerhalb der Reliefs auf, woraus ein enges Nebeneinander von repetierten und variierten Bildelementen resultiert: Die Reliefdarstellungen oszillieren zwischen Gleichheit und Abwechslung. Dies stellt einen wesentlichen Effekt ihres ästhetischen Erscheinungsbildes dar, der innerhalb eines Einzelbildes, aber auch im räumlichen Miteinander mehrerer Reliefobjekte evoziert werden konnte. Neben den gewählten inhaltlichen und semantischen Schwerpunkten legte man gleichberechtigt großen Wert auf eine gefällig komponierte, ästhetisch anspruchsvolle und visuell anspielungsreiche Ausarbeitung des Reliefschmucks – bei figürlichen und gleichermaßen bei floralen Reliefs (letzteres zeigen beispielsweise auch die Ranken der Ara Pacis).<sup>50</sup> Das dabei zugrunde gelegte Prinzip

<sup>50</sup> Diese darf als Vergleich hier nicht unerwähnt bleiben, da in den symmetrisch komponierten Akanthusranken auf den Außenwänden systematisch *variatio* betrieben wurde – durch punktuelle Verwandlung von untergeordneten Akanthuselementen in Zweige anderer Pflanzenarten (Efeu, Wein etc.) sowie durch Einbringen kleiner Tierdarstellungen, was beides nur für den aufmerksamen Betrachter wahrnehmbar ist: Hölscher 1984, 22–23; Castriota 1995, 13–14 und 41–42, Abb. 10–39.



**Abb. 11.10:** Rankeneros mit Blumen und Fruchtkorb zwischen S-Spiralen mit variierten Blüten, Detail derselben Kandelaber-Serie, Basis in den Vatikanischen Museen, Galleria dei Candelabri.

des Wiederholens und Abwandelns findet auch außerhalb der hier thematisierten Materialgruppen Vergleiche, zum Beispiel in der Wandmalerei der Vesuvstädte.<sup>51</sup> Auf allgemeinerer Ebene ist an die so genannten heraldischen Darstellungen zu erinnern, in denen Figuren(-gruppen) spiegelbildlich und häufig in einzelnen Punkten verändert wiederholt werden.<sup>52</sup> Dort wird noch einmal zusätzlich evident, welcher eminenten Anteil am ästhetischen Gesamterscheinungsbild einer Darstellung das Wiederholen

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<sup>51</sup> Als Beispiel sei auf die drei Mittelbilder in einem Raum der Casa 10 in der Insula IX, 2 in Pompeji verwiesen (4. Pompejanischer Stil), die drei einander sehr ähnliche Jünglingsfiguren zeigen; unterschiedliche weitere Bildelemente erlauben eine Identifikation als Endymion, Narziss beziehungsweise Apollo: Pearson 2015, 151–155, Abb. 3–8 mit Interpretation S. 159–162; vgl. Elsner und Squire 2016, 190–203.

<sup>52</sup> Jedoch besteht ein wichtiger struktureller Unterschied in der achsensymmetrischen Geschlossenheit dieser Bilder. Als Beispiele sei hier verwiesen auf die spätklassische Bildhauerei: Borbein 1976, 505, Anm. 23, und 26–28 (dort auch zu mittellitalischen und römischen Reliefs); Agelidis 2009, 64–67 und 234–235, Nr. 108, Taf. 13.d–15.a; Fleischer 1998, 30–32 und 42, Taf. 2–3 (Wiener Amazonensarkophag); Pirson 2014, 226–227, Nr. A 27–A 29, Taf. 9 (zwei der Relieffelder sind über Eck achsensymmetrisch aufeinander beziehbar).

und Abwandeln von Figuren innerhalb eines Bildes besitzt: Heraldische Darstellungen mit einem Mangel an Vorlagen oder an künstlerischer Schöpfungskraft zu erklären, ginge – ebenso wie bei den hier betrachteten Fällen – weit am Befund vorbei. Es zeigt sich erneut, dass die Repetition von Figuren und Haltungsmotiven allein vom Standpunkt künstlerischer Produktion wissenschaftlich nicht vollständig zu erfassen ist und auf Grundlage der Kunsttheorie des Klassizismus nicht hinreichend objektiv beschrieben werden kann.

Denn mehr als nur um ein (vermeintliches) Problem aus dem Bereich der künstlerischen Produktion handelt es sich um eine Frage, die *auch* den Bereich der Rezeption im antiken Verwendungskontext berücksichtigen muss: Gegenspieler dieser repetitiv-variierten Darstellungsweise waren die antiken Auftraggeber und Betrachter, was in letzter Instanz auf die ihnen innewohnenden Geschmacksvorstellungen und Sehgewohnheiten der Entstehungszeit überleitet. Zum Abschluss seien zwei Perspektiven aus dieser Richtung angesprochen.

Die erste betrifft den Punkt der visuellen Wahrnehmung solch repetitiv-variierten Darstellungen und fußt auf einem Erklärungsvorschlag, den die Forschung vor dem Hintergrund der in der mittleren Kaiserzeit gut bezeugten Pendant-Aufstellungen typengleicher Statuenrepliken<sup>53</sup> entwickelt hat: Dort wurde vorgeschlagen, dass durch die Gegenüberstellung von Ähnlichem oder Gleichem gezielt Anreize zu näherer Betrachtung und Vergleich geschaffen wurde, was bei den Skulpturenpendants der Identifizierung der Bildwerke als Kopien berühmter Vorbilder oder aber als unterschiedlich alte Repliken durch den Betrachter entgegen gekommen sein dürfte.<sup>54</sup> Auch im Fall der hier besprochenen Beispiele erscheint denkbar, dass durch die repetitiv-variierte Darstellungsweise die Aufmerksamkeit der Betrachter gesteigert und auf die Reliefobjekte (beziehungsweise die Bildträger, ihre Funktion und Auftraggeber) gelenkt werden sollte; im komplexen Feld der visuellen Kommunikation von Objekten und Personen, wie es innerhalb eines gemeinsamen Kontextes (beispielsweise eines Heiligtums) stattfindet, könnte dies eine bewusste Strategie der Hervorhebung gegenüber anderen Bilderwerken dargestellt haben.<sup>55</sup>

Zweitens ist auch in anderen Bereichen der römischen Kultur auf die große konzeptionelle Bedeutung des Variierens (*variatio*) und der hierdurch evozierten Abwechslung und Verschiedenheit (*varietas*) hinzuweisen – allgemein im Bereich der antiken Rhetorik und Literatur sowie speziell in den Geschmacksvorstellungen

<sup>53</sup> Es handelt sich in der Regel um Repliken bekannter griechischer Bildwerke; Beispiele und Interpretation bei: Bartman 1988; Anguissola 2012, 49–52; Pafumi 2007, 217–221; Slavazzi 2002; Koortbojian 2002, 194–200 und 204; Bartman 1992, 80–82.

<sup>54</sup> Bartman 1988, 219 und 224; Anguissola 2012, 50; Bartman 1992, 82; vgl. Koortbojian 2002, 197–199; Stähli 1995, 408. In der Wandmalerei: Pearson 2015, 156–157 und 160; Elsner und Squire 2016, 190–203.

<sup>55</sup> Am Beispiel einer Mehrfachweihung marmorner Reliefgefäße aus dem Diana-Heiligtum von Nemi wird diese Möglichkeit in der Dissertation des Verfassers diskutiert.

der Entstehungszeit. Als erster Anknüpfungspunkt sei genannt, dass *variatio* als „Abwechslung in Gedankenführung [...] und sprachlichem Ausdruck“ in der antiken Rhetorik eine wichtige Facette des *delectare* darstellte, eines der drei Wege (neben *docere*, *movere*) zur Gewinnung der Zuhörerschaft für die Sache des Redners.<sup>56</sup> Auch *varietas* lässt sich als Gegenspieler menschlichen Überdrusses belegen, wobei der Begriff nach Cicero (Fin. 2. 10) ursprünglich auf Farben angewendet wurde (*in disparibus coloribus dicitur*) und somit dem visuell-erfahrbaren Bereich entstammt.<sup>57</sup>

Diese grundsätzlich positive Beurteilung von Verschiedenheit und Abwechslung in Rhetorik und Literatur erscheint ferner als unangefochtenes Prinzip des Schönen und Gefälligen an zwei Stellen in Varros sprachwissenschaftlicher Schrift *De Lingua Latina* aus den 40er Jahren des 1. Jh. v. Chr.<sup>58</sup> In den als Gegensatzpaar konzipierten Büchern 8 und 9 wird für beziehungsweise wider das Argument der Anomalie/Analogie für eine korrekte Deklination argumentiert – auf beiden Seiten werden Verschiedenheit und Abwechslung überaus positiv beurteilt: Aus Verschiedenheit (*dissimilitudo*) leite sich häufig ungleich mehr Vergnügen (*voluptas*) ab als aus Einförmigkeit, heißt es aufseiten der Anomalisten (Var. L. 8.16.31);<sup>59</sup> und von den Analogisten unangefochten wird dies in Buch 9.33.46 wiederaufgegriffen: Verschiedenheit/Abwechslung ist ansprechend (*varietas iucunditas*) und gewährt Vergnügen (*delectari varietate*).<sup>60</sup> Bezeichnend ist, dass Varros Text dies anhand von Beispielen aus dem Bereich der Ausstattung exemplifiziert, denn als Referenzpunkte dienen Triklinia, Kleidung und Gefäße. Es darf nicht unerwähnt bleiben, dass sich hierbei zumeist Gleichheit und Verschiedenheit schematisch gegenüberstehen – Abwechslung beinhaltet gänzliche Verschiedenheit, ist also nicht automatisch ein Nebeneinander aus gleichen und variierten Elementen wie bei den hier behandelten Reliefobjekten. Zweimal jedoch rekurriert der Text auch auf eine abweichende Ausgestaltung innerhalb eines einheitlichen Rahmens, was den hier betrachteten Fällen an die Seite gestellt werden kann: Erwähnt wird die verschiedene Gestaltung ähnlicher Räume (8.16.32: *gemina conclavia dissimiliter poliunt*) sowie ein mit Silber verzierter Prunktisch mit

<sup>56</sup> Lausberg 2008, 140–144, § 257 (Zitat S. 142, § 257 2 b); Fedaku 2009, 1006–1008. Zum bekannten *variatio delectat* vgl. Cic. *N. D.* 1. 22 sowie Rhet. Her. 3. 22. 3.

<sup>57</sup> Hierzu sowie zu weiteren wichtigen Aspekten: Fitzgerald 2016, bes. 17–21 (Cicero, Begriff), 33–39 (variantenreiche Natur) und 46–56 (Rhetorik) sowie 57–64 (*varietas* wirkt *fastidium*, *satietas* entgegen).

<sup>58</sup> Var. L. 8.16.31–32, bzw. 9.33.46–47; Albrecht 2012 (3. Auflage), 501, 504 und 507 (Überblick); Dahlmann 1966, 96–103 (Kommentar und Begriffe); Goetz und Schoell 1910 (Textausgabe); Neudecker 1988, 119.

<sup>59</sup> *ex dissimilitudine plus voluptatis quam ex similitudine saepe capitur*; vgl. Dahlmann 1966, 98 und 101.

<sup>60</sup> *itaque in vestitu in suppellectile delectari varietate, non paribus subuculis uxoris, respondeo, si varietas iucunditas, magis varium esse in quo alia sunt similia, alia non sunt*; vgl. Dahlmann 1966, 102.

gleichen und abweichenden Schmuckelementen (9.33.46: *abacum argento ornari, ut alia <paria sint, alia> disparia*).

Zu dieser übergeordneten Bedeutung der *variatio/varietas* gesellt sich in den 40er, 30er und 20er Jahren vor Christus (also mit dem Einsetzen des hier betrachteten Zeitraumes) eine besondere Wertschätzung von Raffinesse und Witz in der Ausarbeitung – sowohl in der zeitgenössischen Dichtung als beispielsweise auch in der Wandgestaltung: Die hierbei angestrebte *elegantia* blieb „nicht auf einen bestimmten Kunst- oder Lebensbereich beschränkt; sie war das übergreifende Prinzip der augusteischen Ästhetik“. <sup>61</sup> Ein bezeichnendes Beispiel für die *variatio* eines einheitlichen Motivs, das innerhalb eines Wandbildes mehrfach wiederholt wird, findet sich im so genannten Korridor F der römischen Villa unter der Farnesina in Rom: Die repetitive Einteilung der Felder besteht aus Karyatiden auf Säulen, deren Bekleidung und Haltung bei jeder Figur neu variiert wurde; in einem Fall durchbrach man sogar das maßgebliche Motiv des Girlanden-Haltens, denn eine der Karyatiden richtet sich mit der rechten Hand die Haare. <sup>62</sup>

Wie dort schafft auch bei den zuvor betrachteten Beispielen die abwechslungsreiche Ausgestaltung des zugrunde gelegten Schemas ein spannungsreiches Verhältnis aus Wiederholung und Variation: Auf der einen Seite steht die mehrfache Repetition gleicher Motive und Bildbestandteile, aus der sich ein Eindruck von durchgehender Gleichförmigkeit ergibt; auf der anderen Seite liegt die individuelle Ausgestaltung und Umformulierung der wiederholten Elemente, die zu Abwechslung führt, indem sie das Wiederholte als etwas inszeniert, das nur scheinbar gleich, tatsächlich aber verschieden ist. In diesem Wechselspiel aus Gleich und Ungleich, Repetition und Variation, ist der Blick des aufmerksamen Betrachters der gesuchte Gegenspieler: Zu sehen, genauer zu betrachten, zu vergleichen und durch das artifizielle Nebeneinander aus *similitudo* und *dissimilitudo* erfreut oder unterhalten zu werden, ist eine maßgebliche Eigenschaft – und Absicht – der hier betrachteten Reliefwerke. Dies war der Nährboden ebenso für ‚Spitzfindigkeiten‘ in der Art der spielerischen Ausarbeitung desselben Blütenmotivs von vorne und von hinten auf der Kandelaber-Serie in Rom (Abb. 11.9–11.10) wie auch für die Abwandlung von Attributen und weiteren Details (die heute wohl zum Teil verloren sind) bei der dreifachen Neuformulierung des Satyrs auf dem ‚Puteal Tegel‘ (Abb. 11.1); die Ausarbeitung der drei Satyrfiguren mit identischer Schrittmotivik auf der Kandelaberbasis in Berlin (Abb. 11.4–11.6) gehört ebenso hierhin wie die Gestaltung der vier Putten auf der Jahreszeiten-*ara* in Würzburg als wiederholte, spiegelbildliche Paare, deren unterschiedliche Attribute ihrer inhaltlichen Unterscheidbarkeit dienen. Hier wie dort verkörpert die absichtsvolle

<sup>61</sup> So Grüner 2004, 170 zum Wandel von Wandmalerei und Literatur in der späten Republik und frühen Kaiserzeit. *elegantia* und *humanitas* werden in der ersten der beiden hier behandelten Varro-Stellen aufseiten der Abwechslung/Verschiedenheit verortet: Var. L. 8. 16. 31; vgl. Dahlmann 1966, 98–102.

<sup>62</sup> Grüner 2004, 202–204 (205–211 weitere Beispiele und Einordnung), Abb. 46.

repetitiv-variiierende Gestaltungsweise dieser (und weiterer) Reliefobjekte des römischen Ausstattungsluxus letztlich eine eigenständige, zentrale Qualität innerhalb des römischen *decorum*.<sup>63</sup>

## Synthese: Variation war eine Tugend

Die repetitiv-variiierende Darstellungsweise des Figurenfrieses auf dem ‚Puteal Tegel‘ ist bislang vom Standpunkt der künstlerischen Produktion aus betrachtet und bewertet worden. Auf Grundlage der (allesamt von anderen Reliefwerken bekannten) Figurentypen und der dreifachen Wiederholung der Satyrfigur mit überkreuzten Beinen und zurückgewendetem Oberkörper (Abb. 11.1) schloss man auf einen mangelnden Anspruch und geringes künstlerisches Können der Bildhauer. Als maßgebliche äußere Einflüsse für diese Negativbewertung konnte im Vorangegangenen einerseits die Behandlung des Puteals im Rahmen der Erforschung der ‚neuattischen‘ Kunst benannt werden, die man nach Hauser zunehmend als sekundäres Derivat der griechischen Bildhauerei mit nur ‚dekorativem‘ Anspruch verstand; andererseits erwies sich das Konzept der Geniekunst, das in der philosophischen Ästhetik des 18. Jh. ausgeprägt wurde und Neuschöpfung über Wiederholung oder Variation stellt, als einflussreicher Faktor. Im Bewusstsein der Historizität der kunstwissenschaftlichen Begriffe, wie dies neben ‚neuattisch‘ auch für die Gegensätze ‚Kunst/Dekoration‘ und ‚Figur/Ornament‘ gilt, wurde daher im vorliegenden Beitrag ein alternativer Weg für die Einordnung des Puteals eingeschlagen. Ausgangspunkt ist die repetitiv-variiierende Darstellungsweise des Figurenfrieses: Ein in konzeptioneller Hinsicht ähnliches Nebeneinander von Wiederholung und Abwandlung lässt sich zahlreich an Reliefobjekten des marmornen Ausstattungsluxus in dem hier betrachteten Zeitraum von etwa 50 v. bis 50 n. Chr. aufzeigen (Abb. 11.4–11.6), wobei es auch zwischen mehreren seriengleichen Stücken innerhalb eines gemeinsamen Aufstellungskontextes (Abb. 11.9–11.10) auftreten kann. In allen Fällen war die Schaffung eines ästhetisch anspruchsvollen, visuell dichten Reliefschmuckes ein maßgebliches Anliegen der beteiligten Bildhauer und ihrer Auftraggeber; Figürliches wie Florales konnte zum Gegenstand dieser Gestaltungsweise genommen werden. Als übergeordneten kulturhistorischen Anknüpfungspunkt für diese Art der Ausgestaltung, die wesentlich auf das Wiederholen und Abwandeln von Einzelelementen zurückgreift, bietet sich die positive Bedeutung von *variatio* im Kontext der antiken Rhetorik an sowie ihre explizite Wertschätzung auch im Bereich der Alltagsgegenstände und Innenausstattung eines anspruchsvollen Römers (Varro); hinzu kommt, dass man gerade mit Einsetzen

<sup>63</sup> Zu *decorum* beziehungsweise *decor* siehe Haug 2014, 219, Anm. 5; Bravi 2012, 18–26; Hölscher 2009, 62 mit Anm. 35; Grassinger 1991, 140. Siehe in diesem Band die Beiträge von Platt und Barham.

des hier betrachteten Zeitraums raffiniert abwechslungsreiche Gestaltungen als Ausdruck von *elegantia* auch in anderen Bereichen der Ausstattung besonders schätzte.

Die beiden hier untersuchten Stücken festgestellte *variatio* ist somit positiv als eine Tugend zu charakterisieren, die als ‚Kunst der kleinen Veränderung‘ an den sorgsam wiederholten Figuren vollzogen wurde. Gerade weil die von den Bildhauern in den Veränderungen eingebrachte konzeptionelle und gestalterische Eigenleistung das Maß vollständiger Abwandlung (Transformation) zwar unterschreitet, die reine Repetition aber gezielt übersteigt, bleibt sie dabei für den Betrachter als solche wahrnehmbar. Dieser Umstand trifft besonders dann zu, wenn die Variation innerhalb eines Reliefobjektes beziehungsweise im Zusammenspiel mehrerer Serienstücke an einem Ort entfaltet wurde. Darüber hinaus gilt dies gegenüber der Typentradition oder einem konkreten Vorbild<sup>64</sup> – die nötige Vergleichbarkeit, die in den hier besprochenen Fällen durch physisches Nebeneinander vorliegt, ist dann jedoch in den meisten Fällen eine Angelegenheit des individuellen Bildgedächtnisses des jeweiligen Betrachters.<sup>65</sup>

Diese umfassende Bedeutung und ausdrücklich positive Bewertung von *variatio* als einer maßgeblichen Vorgehensweise jedweder kunstvollen Gestaltung markiert schließlich eine wesentliche Differenz, die zwischen dem antiken Entstehungskontext der hier betrachteten Reliefobjekte und dem modernen Erfahrungshorizont der archäologischen Forschung und Kunstgeschichtsschreibung besteht: Wenn dem heutigen Betrachter implizit die Vorstellung eingepflanzt ist, dass Kunst Neues liefern müsse, so liegt genau hierin ein anachronistischer Zug gegenüber den Zeiten und Kontexten vor, in denen das Prinzip der *variatio* maßgeblich war. Als weiteres Beispiel kann diesbezüglich auf den Bereich der Poetik und Rhetorik verwiesen werden, in dem bis ins 17./18. Jahrhundert hinein die kunstvolle, regelgerechte Variation um ihrer selbst willen geschätzt wurde und mehr als das Neuerfinden galt.<sup>66</sup> Für zukünftige wissenschaftliche Fragen an die ‚neuattischen‘ Reliefobjekte des römischen Ausstattungsluxus und ihr Publikum scheint mir diese Perspektive einen interessanten

<sup>64</sup> Bezeichnender Weise fand eine Bewertung der ‚neuattischen‘ Reliefs jedoch zumeist unter diesen Prämissen statt, wie oben dargelegt. In diesem Zusammenhang interessant ist eine Bemerkung von Fullerton 2003, 101: „Imitation is, for the Neo-Attic reliefs, a fundamental principle of production; it is less easy to ascertain to what degree these figures were meant to be deliberately referential to particular prominent prototypes [...]“ – wie die hier betrachteten Beispiele zeigen, lag der Bezugspunkt öfters auch in einem unmittelbaren physischen Nebeneinander, durch das nicht nur das Kopieren-Können der Bildhauer (vgl. bspw. Kousser 2008, 9–10), sondern auch ihre Fähigkeit zu gefälliger Variatio dem Betrachter vor Augen geführt wurde.

<sup>65</sup> Hier mündet die Untersuchung in das sich neu konstituierende Themenfeld der bild-bildlichen Interaktion („Interpikturalität“); dazu: Anguissola 2012, 55–56 und 174–177 („intertesto“); Squire 2009, 325, Anm. 69.

<sup>66</sup> Fedaku 2008, 1007; siehe auch Cohn 2012, 157–158, sowie zur Kunstgeschichte Herles 2011, 233–234; Häsel 2002, 643–644 (erst die Moderne bricht mit dem Kanon, zuvor wird Neues zur Tradition beigetragen).



Anknüpfungspunkt bereitzuhalten. Denn folgt man der an den marmornen Ausstattungsstücken anzutreffenden *variatio*, führt diese uns durch das antike Material, ohne dass hierbei mit den teilweise tendenziösen Dichotomien ‚Kunst versus Dekoration‘ und ‚Figur versus Ornament‘ der klassischen kunstgeschichtlichen Terminologie operiert werden muss. Wie bei den hier betrachteten Fällen tritt dabei erneut die Notwendigkeit vor Augen, die negative Konnotation des Begriffsfeldes ‚Dekoration/dekorativ‘ für die zukünftige Forschung abzulegen:<sup>67</sup> ‚Kunst‘ und ‚Dekoration‘ sind keine grundsätzlichen Gegensätze – ebenso sind die ‚neuattischen‘ Reliefs sowohl Kunst als auch Dekoration, ohne dass hierbei ein negativer Beigeschmack mitklingen sollte.

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<sup>67</sup> Für eine fruchtbare Verwendung und Rehabilitation des Begriffs ‚Dekoration‘ wirbt Hölscher 2009, 61–63 (siehe auch Hölscher in diesem Band). Vereinzelt wurde auch innerhalb der Forschung zu den marmornen Ausstattungsstücken für einen positiven Dekorationsbegriff argumentiert: Grasinger 1991, 148–149.

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## Abbildungsnachweise

Abb. 11.1: Repro nach Heydemann 1885, Abb. 3.

Abb. 11.2: © Verfasser mit freundlicher Genehmigung der Familie von Heinz, Berlin.

Abb. 11.3: © Verfasser mit freundlicher Genehmigung der Familie von Heinz, Berlin.

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Abb. 11.10: © Musei Vaticani.



Jennifer Trimble

## Figure and ornament, death and transformation in the Tomb of the Haterii

The Tomb of the Haterii is famous for its sculptural decoration; indeed, the crane relief is one of the most frequently reproduced images of Roman art (Fig. 12.1).<sup>1</sup> The tomb's sculptures have likewise played a role in key discussions of the relationship between Roman art and its broader social and cultural context. For example, at the end of the nineteenth century, the sculptures from this tomb – including the ornament on the crane relief – helped fuel Franz Wickhoff's arguments about the originality of Roman art.<sup>2</sup> In the late 1960s, Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli assessed the tomb's sculptures in relation to his influential concept of a stylistic and social dualism in Roman art: the crane relief's mass of iconographic details and lack of naturalistic proportions or treatment of space put it firmly in the tradition of 'arte plebea', or plebeian art, while other sculptures from the Tomb of the Haterii seemed to draw more from 'arte aulica', or court art.<sup>3</sup> With the turn to social historical questions in the 1970s, style became less of a focus; now the Tomb of the Haterii, like other freedmen's tombs, was interpreted as exemplifying the aspirations and values of Roman ex-slaves.<sup>4</sup> In recent years, thanks to their iconographic clarity and realistic details, the tomb's figural reliefs have illuminated a range of topics, including funerary ritual in the Imperial period, the workings of Roman building cranes and the aesthetics of the Roman 'middle classes'.<sup>5</sup>

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1 The crane relief: Vatican Museums, Museo Gregoriano Profano, Sezione X, Inv. 9998. Cf. Sinn and Freyberger 1996, cat. 6, 51–59, fig. 6, Plates 11–16, 65.5, with extensive discussion and bibliography.

2 In tracing the emergence of a Roman art that was *not* inflected by Greek style and form, Wickhoff called the Tomb of the Haterii 'the most important sculpture of this kind that we possess – a work in all respects Roman and bearing no mark of Hellenistic art-tradition' (Wickhoff 1900, 49). Ornament was essential to the development of Wickhoff's argument: 'under such circumstances we may expect to find national art also on those parts of the monument that are purely decorative' (Wickhoff 1900, 50).

3 On 'arte plebea', see Bianchi Bandinelli 1967 and 1970, 51–105; he discusses the Tomb of the Haterii in 1970, 215–221. The tomb's narrative reliefs, including the crane relief, show a 'complete disregard for maintaining a realistic scale of proportions between the different sections and figures', and so are termed part of 'the 'plebeian' trend in art' (1970, 215). On the legacy of 'arte plebea', see de Angelis et al. 2012 and Petersen 2015.

4 On the social historical turn and the study of freedmen's funerary art, see, *inter alia*, Zanker 1975; Kleiner 1977; Zimmer 1982; Kockel 1993; Clarke 2003; Petersen 2003 and 2006.

5 The fundamental publication of the Tomb of the Haterii is Sinn and Freyberger 1996. See also Castagnoli 1941; Giuliano 1968; W. M. Jensen 1978; Coarelli 1979 and 1984; Meighörner-Schardt and Blumenthal 1989; Bodel 1999; Leach 2006; Mayer 2012, 130–137. Detailed photographs are available on the image database of the DAI and the Archaeological Institute of Universität Köln (arachne.uni-koeln.de).



**Fig. 12.1:** The crane relief from the Tomb of the Haterii, Rome. Marble; 1.32 × 1.04 × 0.16 m; c. AD 120.



Despite this fame, the visual intricacy and sophistication of the Tomb of the Haterii's sculptures remain underappreciated. The approaches mentioned above all draw on the sculptures in order to clarify topics outside them. Much less attention has been paid to the ways in which this imagery created an absorbing and challenging visual encounter at the tomb, an encounter designed to help viewers in their grief and in their commemoration of the dead. And yet, the primary audience for sculptures installed inside the tomb, such as the crane relief, was the bereaved family and household members who visited the tomb periodically for funerals and for annual rituals of commemoration. In this chapter, I look again at the crane relief from the Tomb of the Haterii, asking how it worked within this funerary context and for these viewers' needs.<sup>6</sup> To address these questions, it is productive to focus not on style or social status but on the interactions of figure and ornament.

As the introduction to this volume has pointed out, 'figure' and 'ornament' are modern terms, developed within Enlightenment ideas about artistic value and significance.<sup>7</sup> As such, these two terms have traditionally implied a clear distinction and a hierarchy of importance that is not necessarily relevant to ancient art. However, they offer productive starting points here, for the crane relief from the Tomb of the Haterii seems to create strong distinctions between the representations of human figures and their ornamental frames – only to then undercut those very distinctions. There is a dizzying abundance of human bodies on this relief, depicted in different poses, actions, clothes and depths of carving, all of them tightly interwoven with architectural and decorative elements. There is an equally dizzying encrustation of ornament. Bust portraits are elaborately framed; genre scenes are placed between pilasters covered with vegetal ornament; there are garlands, ribbons, religious objects, animals; there are decorative objects whose surfaces are themselves ornamented with decorative relief

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<sup>6</sup> In making grief and funerary ritual central to the interpretation of this imagery, I am indebted to recent scholarship, including Bielfeldt 2003; Zanker and Ewald 2004; Platt 2012 (further elaborated in Platt's chapter in Platt and Squire (eds.) 2017). I do not offer elaborate allegorical or theological readings of the material (*contra* W. M. Jensen 1978). Rather, this is an exercise in what Verity Platt has called 'contextualizing formalism' (Platt 2012, 227). The emphasis is on the carving and the viewing experience. On the theories of reception underlying my own approach, Trimble 2015; on twentieth-century debates about the interpretation of Roman funerary imagery, see most recently Elsner 2016; on Roman funerary rituals, see Toynbee 1971, 43–64, Bodel 1999, Lindsay 2000, Hope 2000; on who the viewers of tomb imagery were and when they came to the tomb, see Zanker and Ewald 2004, 33–36; on ancient theories and practices of seeing, see the chapters collected in Squire 2016.

<sup>7</sup> On this history, see the introduction to this volume – along with e. g. the chapters by Platt, Barham and Reinhardt in this volume. Hölscher 2009 usefully situates ancient architectural sculpture neither as meaningless 'ornament' nor as actively intended visual communication; he draws instead on the Latin term *decor* and its connotations of aesthetic and contextual appropriateness – an aspect further developed in Hölscher's chapter in this book. Cf. Marconi 2004 on *kosmos* (with further bibliography in this volume's introduction, 2, n. 3).

sculpture. Indeed, ornament and figure sometimes blur, as when animal figures look like vegetal ornament leaping up a pilaster, or Erotes are carved as figural and vegetal hybrids, or the dead are represented as both vividly present and obviously sculptural. On the crane relief, there is no clear distinction or hierarchy of importance between figure and ornament; the relief's visual and semantic effects emerge instead from their complex interactions.

In the following pages, I explore some of these effects.<sup>8</sup> First, I review what is known about the tomb's discovery, reconstruction and founders. On this basis, I then analyse the workings of intermediality, framing and *mise en abyme*. These effects operated not only within the crane relief but also between the relief and the tomb's other sculptures, and in relation to the built space of the tomb and the viewer's experience within it. Ultimately, I interpret the crane relief as a visual meditation on the simultaneous existence of rigid classifications (bodily, social, visual) and the possibility of blurred and even crossed boundaries. The crane relief offers an extraordinary exploration of ideas about permanence and change. Death, social structure and the possibilities of visual art intersected in the Tomb of the Haterii, creating a powerful space of bereavement and commemoration.

## Archaeological and epigraphic context

The Tomb of the Haterii lies 8.4 km southeast of Rome along the ancient Via Labicana, near Centocelle.<sup>9</sup> Roadworks in 1848 turned up an ancient wall and several pieces of sculpture – including the crane relief – but further exploration was disrupted by the events of the Risorgimento.<sup>10</sup> The tomb was rediscovered during roadworks in 1970, and a three-day excavation produced several more sculptural finds.<sup>11</sup> This history explains why there are few precise findspots for the material from the tomb. Another difficulty is that the tomb was largely destroyed by 1848, with evidence of at least one rebuild in the late antique or mediaeval period. No graves or sarcophagi have

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<sup>8</sup> In addition to the effects of form, depth and placement discussed here, the use of colourful paint would have highlighted details and correspondences on the relief. Unfortunately, none of the original colour survives and so colour is not part of my analysis. On polychromy in Roman sculpture, with bibliography, see Abbe 2015.

<sup>9</sup> Its overgrown remains can still be seen at Via Casilina 922, next to a petrol station. Key bibliography for the tomb's discovery and excavation: Giuliano 1968; Coarelli 1979 and 1984; and Sinn and Freyberger 1996. Sinn and Freyberger in particular have systematically collected and analysed all the archaeological and sculptural evidence; this chapter depends on their work.

<sup>10</sup> On the discovery of the tomb, see Sinn and Freyberger 1996, 11–12; Giuliano 1968, 450–451 and Plate I.

<sup>11</sup> Coarelli 1979 and 1984.



**Fig. 12.2:** Door lintel from the Tomb of the Haterii, probably belonging to the main entrance. From left to right: Mercury (headless), Proserpina, Pluto and Ceres. On the soffit underneath (not visible here) were carved ears of grain and poppies. Marble; 0.65 × 1.64 × 0.29 m; c. AD 120.

ever been recorded here, suggesting that these were cremation burials, originally preserved in urns that are now missing.<sup>12</sup>

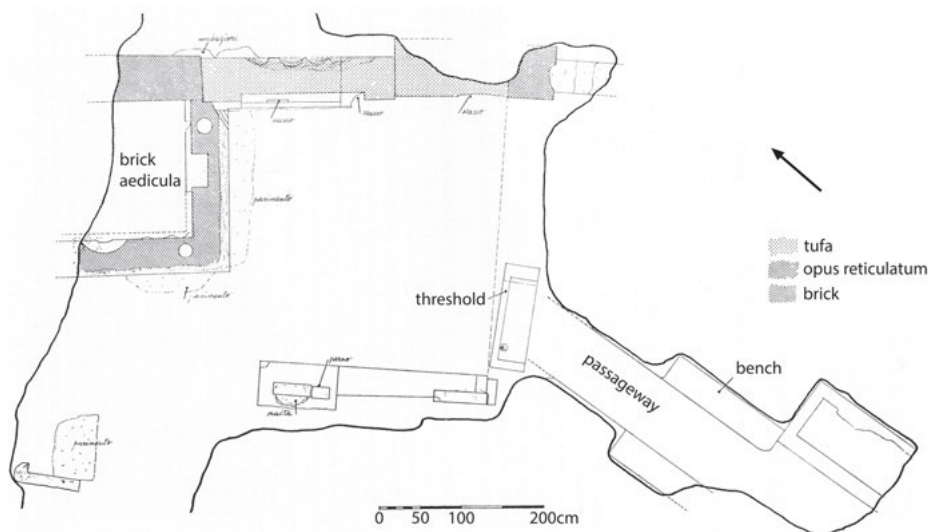
Still, some features are clear. This was a two-story tomb with a garden.<sup>13</sup> It stood on the south side of the Via Labicana and diagonally to it, probably with the main entrance on the second storey of the northwest facade, facing people coming from Rome. The hefty door lintel depicting the gods of the underworld was probably mounted over this entrance (Fig. 12.2).<sup>14</sup> On its underside are ears of grain and capsules of poppy; entrance into this funerary space was framed by Ceres' abundance. Large architectural fragments belonged to an impressive exterior decoration, while smaller fragments show that the interior included aediculae, niches and ornamented walls.<sup>15</sup> Several reliefs found in the tomb – almost certainly including the crane

<sup>12</sup> Sinn and Freyberger provide some additional findspot information by tracking the dates when each object was found (1996, 20–21). On the late antique or mediaeval rebuild, see Sinn and Freyberger 1996, 11. Urns of uncertain provenance have been suggested to come from this tomb, but none can be firmly linked to it (Sinn and Freyberger 1996, 15 and 33).

<sup>13</sup> On temple tombs: Toynbee 1971, 130–132; Wrede 1978; von Hesberg 1992, 182–201. There was no trace of a street-side entrance in the excavated lower storey remains, which were excavated into the tufa bedrock, suggesting that the entrance was on the second floor, reached by steps.

<sup>14</sup> Vatican Museums, Museo Gregoriano Profano, Sezione X, Inv. 10018. Sinn and Freyberger 1996, cat. 9, 76–80, Plates 25–27. Sculptural details show that the lintel was meant to be seen from the right.

<sup>15</sup> Exterior architectural fragments: Sinn and Freyberger 1996, cat. 20–23. Interior architectural fragments: Sinn and Freyberger 1996, cat. 26–30. A pediment depicting Cerberus and an archivolt fragment are the right shape and size for a niche or the entrance to an internal chamber; two travertine socles faced with cipollino surely belonged to costly inner walls (Sinn and Freyberger 1996, cat. 34 and 26). Additional architectural fragments (cat. 24–28) may have belonged to the exterior or the interior.



**Fig. 12.3:** Plan of the 1970 excavation of the Tomb of the Haterii, showing part of the lower storey of the tomb, with added labels and north arrow. The north arrow is very approximate, since neither the 1848 nor the 1970 plan includes cardinal directions. The tomb's relationship to the ancient Via Labicana is not precisely known, but the road ran east-west here, just to the northwest of the excavated area.

relief – were mounted on walls inside.<sup>16</sup> The 1970 excavations uncovered part of the lower storey: a chamber of  $3.50 \times 3.50\text{m}$  (Fig. 12.3).<sup>17</sup> It was elaborately ornamented: paved in marble, with marble cladding on the walls and marble mouldings at their base. A brick aedicula with niches inside it stood inside the chamber. A doorway led southward into a rock-cut passageway with facing benches, and from there presumably to the garden.<sup>18</sup>

**16** The back of the crane relief was roughly shaped with a small pick or point chisel, and its sides were smoothed by a claw chisel and provided with clamp holes, suggesting that the relief was originally mounted on a wall. The 1970 excavation plan indicates three *scassi* along the east wall of the chamber where marble plaques had once been affixed (fig. 12.3; Coarelli 1979, 257), though these are too small to have held the crane relief. In 1848, expert supervision was apparently needed to remove certain reliefs from their settings, indicating that they were still *in situ*; unfortunately, no record was made of their original locations (Sinn and Freyberger 1996, 20).

**17** The surviving walls stood to a maximum of one metre high. Evidence of marble floor paving just outside this chamber suggested that the tomb extended beyond it (Coarelli 1979, 1984). The chamber was filled with the spoil of the 1848 excavations, indicating how far those extended (Coarelli 1979, 257).

**18** The garden is further attested by the finds of a puteal and a fountain sculpture of a cow (Sinn and Freyberger 1996, cat. 10 and 13), as well as a statue base dedicated to Silvanus found some metres south of the tomb in 1970 (Coarelli 1979; Sinn and Freyberger 1996, cat. 11). On funerary gardens, see Gregori 1987–1988.



**Fig. 12.4:** Reconstruction of the founding inscription from the Tomb of the Haterii. The fragments on the left and in the centre were among the first finds in 1848; the bottom right corner was found during the 1970 excavations. Marble; 0.98 m high x 0.13 m deep; late first/early second century AD.

Sculptural analysis dates the tomb to the first quarter of the second century; it was complete around AD 120. The magisterial publication by Sinn and Freyberger catalogues forty-four finds: inscriptions, portrait busts, figural reliefs, architectural elements and one mosaic fragment. The authors conclude that one workshop produced almost all this material.<sup>19</sup> Notably, much of it seems to have been recycled for use here. For example, the famous monuments relief, thought to represent five buildings on which the tomb's founder worked, is carved into an elaborate moulded profile on the back.<sup>20</sup> It appears that the Tomb of the Haterii largely made use of a sculptural

<sup>19</sup> On the date, see Sinn and Freyberger 1996, 27–29, *pace* Coarelli's argument for multiple construction phases (1984, 169). Sinn and Freyberger do a heroic job of sorting out which finds came from this tomb and which did not, and I follow their findings here (Sinn and Freyberger 1996, *passim*). On the workshop: Sinn and Freyberger 1996, 29–30; an exception is one of the two female portraits, now in Copenhagen (their cat. 42; see n. 24 below), which appears to have been made in a different workshop.

<sup>20</sup> The monuments relief: Vatican Museums, Museo Gregoriano Profano, Sezione X, inv. 9997; Sinn and Freyberger 1996, cat. 8, 63–76, fig. 9, Plates 19.2, 19.3, 20–24. Coarelli argued that this relief was not on view in the tomb because the side with the moulded profile was displayed instead (Coarelli 1979, 258). Sinn and Freyberger find it likelier that a block initially carved with this profile was subsequently re-used for the carving of this relief (Sinn and Freyberger 1996, 72). Several other pieces from the tomb show signs of re-use in the way the stone was cut, in the use of worn or damaged blocks, in the non-matching profiles at the sides or back, in the carvings on more than one face, and in the evidence of repairs done before installation (Sinn and Freyberger 1996, 30–32).

workshop's discarded or reusable pieces of marble. The crane relief, however, shows no signs of re-use but was apparently carved specifically for this tomb.

Inscriptions tell us about the people buried here. The fragmentary *titulus* or founding inscription was probably posted outside, above the main door. Sinn and Freyberger reconstruct it accordingly (Fig. 12.4):<sup>21</sup>

*Q. Ha[terius Tychicus] / et Hater[ia Q. l. Helpis uxor] / sibi et libertis l[ibertabusque] / posterisq(ue)  
eor[um et] / Q. Hater[io Q. l. Rufio[ni patr(ono)] / optimo [de se bene] me[r]ito fec(erunt)]. //*  
*Q. Haterio Q. f. / Rufino, / Q. Haterio Q. f. / Aniceto. //*  
*Virgines raptae, / Hateria Q. fil.) / Magna, / Hateria Q. fil. / Quintilla.*

Quintus Haterius [Tychicus] and Hateria [Helpis, freedwoman of Quintus, his wife], built this tomb for themselves and for their freedmen and freedwomen and their descendants, and for Quintus Haterius Rufio, best and well-deserving [patron].

For Quintus Haterius Rufino, son of Quintus, and Quintus Haterius Aniceto, son of Quintus.

Stolen maidens, Hateria Magna, daughter of Quintus, and Hateria Quintilla, daughter of Quintus.

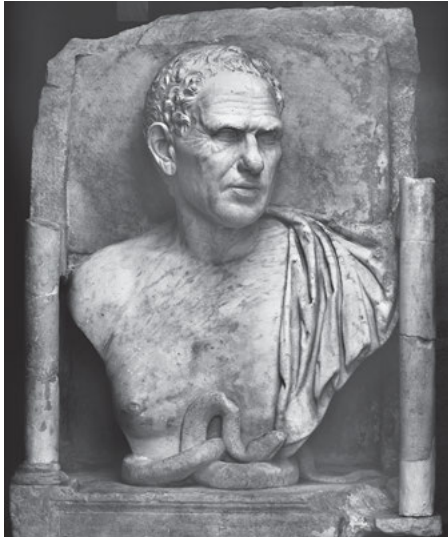
The founders, Q. Haterius and Hateria, have the same *nomen*, suggesting either that both were ex-slaves freed by the same master, or that she was freed by Haterius, who then married her; he could then be free or freed.<sup>22</sup> Q. Haterius is thought to be the same man as Q. Haterius Tychicus, a freedman and public building contractor (*redemptor*) known from another inscription recorded in the sixteenth century but now lost.<sup>23</sup> Two bust portraits from the tomb probably represent the founding couple (Figs. 12.5 and 12.6).<sup>24</sup> She is depicted finely draped, he with a snake that connects him to the underworld gods seen both over the main entrance (Fig. 12.2) and on a

<sup>21</sup> The *titulus* fragments: Vatican Museums, Museo Gregoriano Profano, Sezione X, inv. 10011 and Museo Nazionale Romano, Aula 8, inv. 387540 (currently on display at the Vatican). Sinn and Freyberger 1996, cat. 1a and 1b, 37–39, figs. 3–5, Plates 2, 3.3, 66.10. On other inscriptions from the tomb that name people, see Sinn and Freyberger 1996, 22–26, cat. 2, cat. 11, cat. 43.

<sup>22</sup> Sinn and Freyberger 1996, 22. On ‘Tychicus’ and ‘Helpis’ as slave names, see Solin 1996, 320 and 555–557. Q. Haterius Rufio, the only other person named in the main part of the inscription, was either a close relative or the ex-owner of the founding couple. On the family of the Haterii, see Coarelli 1984, 175. On family and household in Roman tombs, see Hope 1997.

<sup>23</sup> Codex Pighianus f. 61 v<sup>1</sup>; *CIL* VI 607 and VI 30801b. This connection was first suggested by Cavendon (1850, 159–160) and is most fully developed by Coarelli (1979, 266–268); see also Sinn and Freyberger 1996, 23–24 and cat. 40, pp. 115–116, Plate 62.2. On the building industry’s structure, with senatorial owners at the top and pyramids of patron-freedman relationships below, see Steinby 1982.

<sup>24</sup> These two busts were relatively late additions; both date to AD 110–120. Vatican Museums, Museo Gregoriano Profano, Sezione X, Inv. 10025 and 10026. Sinn and Freyberger 1996, cat. 3, 40–43, fig. 1, Plates 1, 3.4, 4, 6; cat. 4, 43–45, fig. 2, Plates 5, 7, 65.4. A second portrait of Hateria, now in Copenhagen, is also from this tomb (Ny Carlsberg Glyptothek, inv. 767; Sinn and Freyberger 1996, cat. 42, 117–118, Plate 63). On the role of portraits in tombs, see Zanker 1975; Wrede 1971 and 1981; Kleiner 1977; Kockel 1993; Zanker and Ewald 2004, 179–245; Fejfer 2008, 105–137; Platt 2012, 224–227.



**Fig. 12.5:** Bust portrait in aedicula from the Tomb of the Haterii, probably depicting the founder, Haterius. Marble; 0.72 × 0.51 × 0.38 m; c. AD 110–120.



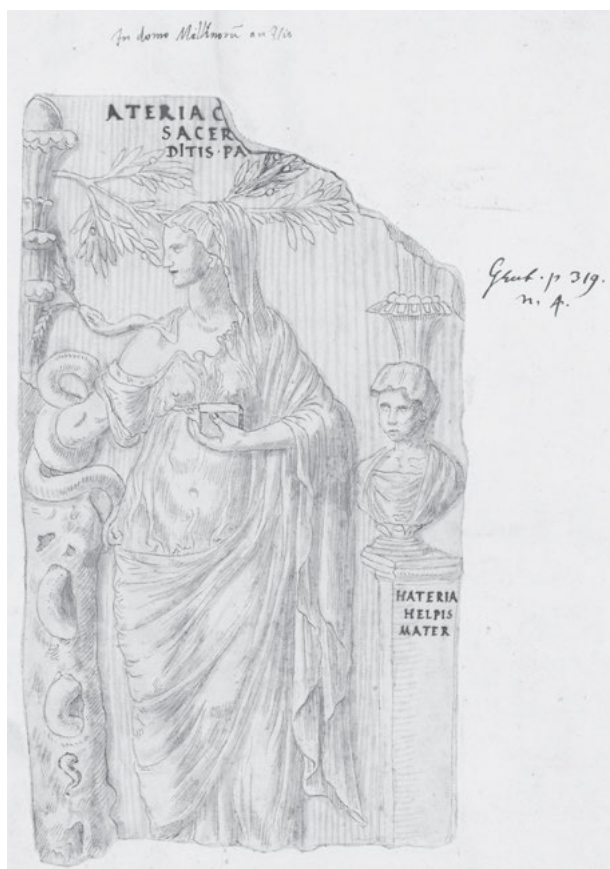
**Fig. 12.6:** Bust portrait in aedicula from the Tomb of the Haterii, probably depicting the founder, Hateria. Marble; 0.68 × 0.57 × 0.44 m; c. AD 110–120.

lost relief from the tomb depicting one of the daughters as a priestess of Dis Pater in the presence of a snake (Fig. 12.7).<sup>25</sup> The filiations show that the four children were freeborn, meaning they were born after Hateria was freed. The two daughters are *virgines raptae*, implying that they died before marriage; this phrasing connects them, too, to the door lintel (Fig. 12.2), to the priestess relief (Fig. 12.7) and to a fragmentary relief of the Rape of Proserpina (Persephone) from the tomb.<sup>26</sup> Strikingly, this inscription envisages a double descent line: one through the family's children and the other through the family's freed slaves. The latter are visually represented on the *collocatio* or lying-in-state relief from the tomb, showing a dead woman on a bier in the atrium of a house, surrounded by lamps, garlands, incense burners, musicians and mourn-

<sup>25</sup> The priestess relief: Codex Pighianus f. 35 r<sup>3</sup>. It is considered to come from the Tomb of the Haterii because of the area in which it was found and the relief's names and portrait features: Sinn and Freyberger 1996, cat. 43, 118–119, Plate 64.1.

<sup>26</sup> The Rape of Proserpina relief: Vatican Museums, Museo Gregoriano Profano, Sezione X, inv. 10022; Sinn and Freyberger 1996, cat. 7, 59–63, fig. 8, Plates 17–19.1. On the rape of Proserpina/Persephone as thematising untimely death, see Zanker and Ewald 2004, 90–94. Mayer argues that the use of myth in the Haterii tomb is not an attempt to display erudition (2012, 134–135) but that it instead creates 'a highly emotional mode of employing mythological imagery to express grief over the death of beloved children and spouses' (2012, 133). On Mayer's larger project of identifying a middle class aesthetics, see Wallace-Hadrill 2013 and Squire 2013.





**Fig. 12.7:** The priestess relief, now lost but recorded in the Codex Pighianus (f. 35 r<sup>3</sup>), considered to be from the Tomb of the Haterii because of the area in which it was found and the names and portrait features seen on the image. A woman named (H)ateria is depicted as a priestess (*sacerdos*) of Dis Pater; she stands next to a portrait bust of Hateria Helpis, her mother. Original dimensions unknown.

ers (Fig. 12.8); three of the mourners wear the conical cap of manumitted slaves.<sup>27</sup> Slavery and manumission were essential parts of this imagined posterity.

The tomb's inscriptions and sculptures were all richly interconnected, but in the remainder of this chapter I will focus on just one: the crane relief (Fig. 12.1). This image is dominated by a mausoleum with a treadwheel crane rising up along the left side. For reasons of space, I can say very little here about this magnificent crane. It

<sup>27</sup> The *collocatio* relief: Vatican Museums, Museo Gregoriano Profano, Sezione X, inv. 9999. Sinn and Freyberger 1996, cat. 5, 45–51, fig. 7, plates 8–10, 65.7. The dead woman is either Hateria or one of her daughters (Sinn and Freyberger 1996, 25, 47).





**Fig. 12.8:** The *collocatio* or lying-in-state relief from the Tomb of the Haterii, depicting a deceased woman on a tall bier in the atrium of a house and surrounded by torches, incense burners, garlands, musicians, mourners and freed slaves. Marble; 0.76 × 0.94 × 0.80 m; c. AD 110–120.

is so accurately depicted that a functioning, life-size reconstruction could be made in Bonn in 1989.<sup>28</sup> The crane has symbolic dimensions, too, signalled by the ritual of completion depicted at the top.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, the crane is coded masculine by its phallic appearance, active male labourers and participation in the external world of work, and by its contrast to the contained, house-like mausoleum of the dead woman and

<sup>28</sup> This was the largest and most complex kind of crane known in the Roman world (Vitr. 10.2.1–10; Adam 1977, 38–41; Zimmer 1982, 160–161; Landels 2000, 84–98). The Bonn reconstruction could lift weights of over five metric tons to a height of 8 metres and move them a short distance over the ground: Meighörner-Schardt and Blumenthal 1989.

<sup>29</sup> This is not a staged apotheosis showing the imminent release of a bird from the basket (*pace* Bodel 1999). A reef knot is clearly depicted at the front of the basket and the two men are shown pulling on the rope's ends to *tighten* the knot, not undo it (this detail also refutes W. M. Jensen 1978, 181). On this scene as a topping out ritual, see Sinn and Freyberger 1996, 58, n. 64; Adam 1977, 41.

children, whose images are still and immovably framed.<sup>30</sup> The crane appears here as a symbol of transformation, a machine that can multiply human strength and transform building materials into a finished mausoleum. It is also an engine of social transformation: several of its workers wear the *pileus*, the conical cap signifying manumission, and they may have been freed by will, as also seen on the *collocatio* relief (Fig. 12.8).<sup>31</sup> But the crane is also a reminder of the limits of the power of the living. Cranes were set up temporarily for a construction project and then removed, much as the living necessarily moved on and left the immobile dead behind. Nothing could change the fact of the death of Hateria and the children. On this relief, the juxtaposition of crane and mausoleum offers a meditation on death, on what the dead are due and on what it is impossible to give them.

Very different possibilities are presented by the ornately decorated mausoleum that dominates the crane relief. There are similarities between this sculpted tomb and the actual Tomb of the Haterii: both were two-storey mausolea with gardens, dedicated to Hateria and her children. However, the carving represents a mausoleum much larger than the tomb within which it was found, and none of the depicted decoration matches the actual decoration found in the tomb.<sup>32</sup> In other words, this image presented a heightened, elaborated vision of the Tomb of the Haterii, or perhaps of this kind of tomb more generally. This heightening in turn allowed for the creation of intricate visual effects, and these effects worked differently in different sectors of the relief.

To explore them, I will take as a normative starting point the upper storey of the mausoleum, which is particularly ornate and orderly in its sculptural details. A grand staircase leads up to a monumental entrance; below are a fence with diagonally set posts and an altar, perhaps in the tomb's garden. At the top of the stairs, four prostyle Corinthian columns with eagles above are wrapped with vegetal ornament; the seasons are depicted on either side of the main door. Above, Hateria is portrayed in a bust in the pediment, indicating that this is her tomb. Around the side are portraits

<sup>30</sup> I thank Nancy Worman for pointing out this gender contrast. On tombs as houses, see Hope 1997. I suggest that the man at top left is Haterius himself: he is larger than the other workers and his face is rendered in more portrait-like detail, resembling Haterius' portrait bust (Fig. 12.5). Compare the funerary stele of Longidienus, a ship builder from Ravenna, on which Longidienus is shown both in a bust portrait and at work, wearing a working man's tunic (Zimmer 1982, 143–144, no. 62).

<sup>31</sup> Given the skilled nature of the work of a crane, the importance of coordinated teamwork in accomplishing it, and the value of having a stable crew over time, the crane workers were most likely slaves or freedmen, not free labourers.

<sup>32</sup> Sinn and Freyberger note that this representation of the tomb is 'idealisiert und übersteigert' (1996, 56); von Hesberg calls it a 'wunschhafte Projektion' (1992, 184). Scholars have interpreted this disparity in relation to Haterius' desire to show how carefully and fully he has honoured his wife's death. I would add another implication: like the image of the mausoleum, the crane depicted on this relief may simultaneously have offered *both* realistic details *and* a heightened version of reality.

of three of her children in tondi, ringed by laurel wreaths for the boys and carved as a shell for the girl.<sup>33</sup> Below their portraits are winged Amores playing with mythological animals or holding a garland, and below that are three female figures with various objects.<sup>34</sup> All these figures are organised into distinct registers and framed spaces, with strong horizontals and verticals. This orderly display was appropriate; a tomb's exterior was its public face, seen by anyone passing by along the road. But this regimentation then allowed for striking contrasts and ambiguous effects elsewhere on the relief. I turn to those below.

## Intermediality

'Figure' and 'ornament' are useful terms in approaching the crane relief. The carving presents certain figures as especially important, notably the portraits of Hateria in the pediment and those of her three children along the side wall. But the relief promptly complicates this treatment by repeating the same figure in different media, at different scales and in different kinds of imagery.<sup>35</sup> Most strikingly, Hateria appears several times: in the bust portrait in the mausoleum's pediment, on the funerary couch above, as a statue of Venus in the display wall at upper right, perhaps in the central portrait head above that, and perhaps in the open door at the base of the tomb. She is also repeated throughout the Tomb of the Haterii in different media and in different genres: on the *titulus* (Fig. 12.4); in two portrait busts in the round (Fig. 12.6 and one other); in a bust on the priestess relief (Fig. 12.7); and perhaps as the central person on the *collocatio* relief (Fig. 12.8). There is repetition of genre as well as figure: the two portrait busts of Hateria in the round were seen in relation to her bust portrait on the priestess relief and her bust portrait on the pediment on the crane relief. There was also translation across genres and media. This tomb was more than a home for Hateria's remains; it was a space of images and remembrance of her through which she was multiplied, repeatedly translated and perhaps infinitely translatable.

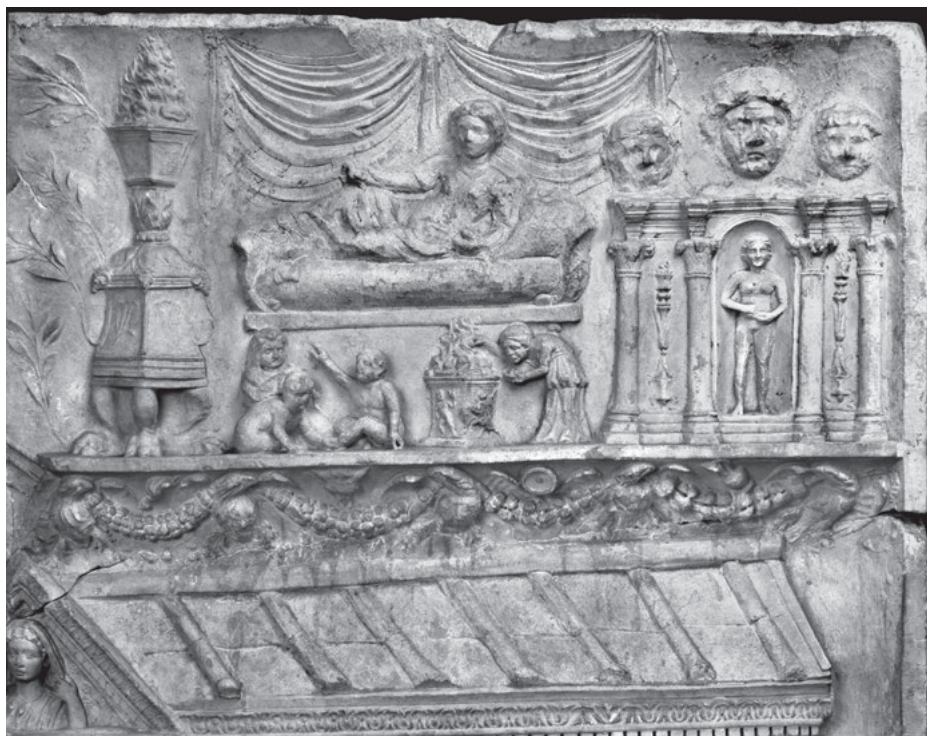
This play of genres and media is what I mean by intermediality.<sup>36</sup> With every new depiction or naming, Hateria was not simply repeated but also transposed from one

<sup>33</sup> Four children are listed in the founding inscription, but only three are depicted here; it is not clear what this means about when each child died.

<sup>34</sup> These may represent Hateria's qualities as wife and mother (Wrede 1978, 420), but are more probably the Fates (Sinn and Freyberger 1996, 55).

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Reinhardt's chapter in this volume, on the visual possibilities of repetition for creating *varietas* – along with Elsner (esp. 384–387) on the workings of repetition and *mise en abyme* on sarcophagi.

<sup>36</sup> I do not mean intermediality in the modern sense related to current media practices and structures (e.g. K. B. Jensen 2008). On the way multiple genres of portraiture within a single funerary image create a recession of memory, see Koortbojian 2005.



**Fig. 12.9:** Detail of the upper right portion of the crane relief from the Tomb of the Haterii, showing the interior of the upper storey of the depicted mausoleum.

size and medium to another. Visitors to the Tomb of the Haterii saw Hateria's name and image again and again, and on repeated visits: during her funeral, during subsequent funerals, during the annual rituals commemorating the dead. In this way, she was made an ancestor figure and a focal point; her death and commemoration remained a touchstone for all future activity in the tomb.<sup>37</sup> On the one hand, this intermediality helped mourners visualise death and remembrance, and come to grips with the transformation of Hateria's actual body, probably preserved in an urn as a mix of ashes and bone fragments. On the other hand, these translations across media opened up strange spaces between life and death. This becomes particularly visible at the upper right.

<sup>37</sup> Compare the family tomb of Claudia Semne, in which Claudia is similarly made the central figure (Wrede 1971). In discussing the Tomb of the Varii at Ostia (Isola Sacra), Lauren Petersen points to the role of the honoured patroness as ancestor for the freed tomb-builders and their descendants (Petersen 2006, 218). More broadly on Roman ideas about freedwomen, who navigated a problematic transition from sexually exploited slave to sexually chaste matron, see Perry 2014.

The upper right portion of the relief has been interpreted as the interior of the tomb. As a display space for statuary and ritual offerings, it probably represents the interior of the upper story (Fig. 12.9).<sup>38</sup> The cloth wall-hanging behind Hateria's couch indicates an interior space, but this is no ordinary room: five eagles linked by garlands carry the ground line, shifting this scene into an unearthly realm. Here, the sculptural representation of bodies evokes memory through ambiguities of representation. At the far right is a display wall topped with large, unfinished portrait heads, representing either three of the children or two children and Hateria in the centre.<sup>39</sup> In the central niche, Hateria is represented as a statue of Venus, a means of praising her extraordinary beauty and virtues in life.<sup>40</sup> The intermediality of this figure is as important as its iconography. Hateria's depiction as a statue within a display wall carved onto the surface of a relief creates several stages of removal from the space and time of the viewer: the viewer is asked to contemplate and remember Hateria in yet another way. Multiple kinds and genres of carving thus interact in a small space, miniaturising what is life-sized and engaging the viewer's eye and mind.

The carving actively participated in the viewer's process of remembering by creating ambiguous representations and calling attention to its own games. On the one hand, the scene's central figures appear more lifelike than the statuary of the display wall on the far right. In contrast to the strict frontality of her statue as Venus, Hateria reclines on her *klinê* with upright torso, and three children play at her feet; in their tightly grouped play, varied poses, and active gestures, they are very different from the looming portrait heads on the right. On the other hand, *klinê* sculptures were common in tombs; viewers probably understood Hateria's depiction on the couch as yet another image of sculpture within the tomb, albeit of a different kind. And, the children's clothing removes them from the realm of life: two are naked and one wears the lion pelt of Hercules, reminding the viewer that these children are among the honoured dead. Then again, a stooped, older woman places something on an altar. She is central to the scene but depicted at a smaller scale than Hateria reclining or the children playing. Alone among them, she performs a funerary ritual and so is apparently to be seen as a living figure among statuary – even as she is also a carving on the surface of the sculptural relief, just like the other figures.<sup>41</sup> The viewer is thus

<sup>38</sup> Wrede 1978, 420; Sinn and Freyberger 1996, 55. The lower story of this kind of tomb usually held the urns or sarcophagi (Toynbee 1971, 131; Wrede 1978, 424).

<sup>39</sup> Hateria flanked by two children: Wrede 1978, 422. Alternative identifications: Sinn and Freyberger 1996, 55–56.

<sup>40</sup> On the Roman practice of sometimes representing the deceased (especially freedmen and freedwomen in the Imperial period) in the guise of gods, see Wrede 1981.

<sup>41</sup> Wrede sees her as a living person within a sepulchral sculpture gallery (1978, 422). There may be models in earlier statuary for the figures of the children playing (Wrede 1978, 421–422), but it seems less likely that viewers knew of those sculptural models and therefore interpreted these figures as images of sculptures.

constantly asked to interpret the same visual phenomenon (mimetic figural carving) in different ways and to question the ontological status of each figure.

This spectrum of figural imagery suggests that the sculptor deliberately carved ambiguities, creating an unearthly scene that was simultaneously within the tomb and also beyond it. Categories of figure and representation are blurred. On the one hand, the lamps blaze brightly, the altar is tended and the right kind of statuary is present for this to be a proper tomb. On the other hand, this figural ambiguity creates a space for memory in which the dead woman and her children can reappear in the bereaved viewer's mind. In short, the crane relief exploits the possibilities of sculptural intermediality to represent not only the dead and their appropriate commemoration, but also the mourners' memories of Hateria and her children. The image both creates and claims to be this commemoration, not just representing ritual but showing it enacted, not only representing the figures of the dead but showing them remembered.

## Framing

If figures on the crane relief are swept up in repetition and intermediality, the use of ornament is equally intricate. This is especially visible in the treatment of frames and framing. The category of the frame, too, took shape within Enlightenment aesthetics. Kant explicitly defined the frame around a picture as an example of ornament (*Zierat*), just like the drapery of a statue or the colonnade in front of a building. These ornaments were seen as attached to the work but not intrinsic to it; they were assigned a subsidiary role (*parergon*) in relation to the work of art (*ergon*).<sup>42</sup> From this perspective, we might identify as framing elements on the crane relief those outlines that highlight important imagery, or the decorative bands and generic scenes that define the edges of a given space – all considered part of the composition but also secondary within it. And yet, on the crane relief, and in the Tomb of the Haterii more broadly, such framing elements work in unexpected ways. In fact, the play of frames and framing is central to the operations of the imagery.

Above, I emphasised the regimented effect of the mausoleum's upper storey (Fig. 12.1); its exuberant ornament is carved as an abundance of framing. The three children's deeply carved portraits are set into tondi, themselves bordered by pilasters

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<sup>42</sup> On this passage in the *Critique of Judgment* (Kant 1987, 72) and on Derrida's influential discussion of the *parergon* (Derrida 1987), see now Platt and Squire 2017, esp. 38–59; cf. Squire's introduction to this volume, 18–20, along with the chapters by e.g. Neer (206–209), Platt (241–242), Barham (280–282), and Elsner (353, n. 2). On the play of frames and framing on Roman sarcophagi, see Platt 2012. For an attempt to think through *parergon/ergon* relationships in relation to Roman portraiture, see Trimble 2017.



**Fig. 12.10:** Detail of the lower right portion of the crane relief from the Tomb of the Haterii, showing the exterior podium wall of the depicted mausoleum.

to left and right and shallower relief panels above and below. If we now look at the lower storey or podium wall, we see frames departing from these orderly rules (Fig. 12.10). By contrast to the more public facade of the upper storey, the lower storey and back door of such a tomb may have been oriented more to the garden and to the views of the household. The crane relief seems to take advantage of this shift in expectations. On the upper storey, heads and bodies are elaborately and symmetrically framed; on the lower storey, the relief undercuts its own frames and categories, creating new challenges and possibilities.

The podium wall is framed by ornamented pilasters at left and right and by heavy architectural mouldings above and below. Within these bounds, the topmost relief band depicts Amores, but not symmetrically: two flank a basket and a third faces the other way. Their torsos turn into swirling plant tendrils instead of legs; they are hybrids crossing the boundary between figural and vegetal.<sup>43</sup> Below them are more

<sup>43</sup> On strange images at the edges of compositions that call the centre into question, see Camille 1992; Platt 2009.



winged Amores with garlands strung between; these are symmetrical and predictable, but by now bands of ornament are occupying the entire wall. Looking at the mausoleum's upper storey taught the viewer that this kind of decoration was for outlining and highlighting, but down here it takes over the centre. Even the pilasters to either side participate in this boundary crossing: animals leap up them, entwined with and impersonating vegetal ornament. This blurring of categories extends to other sculptures from the tomb. On an elaborately carved pilaster, figures of the seasons are vertically stacked and intertwined with vegetal scrolls; this ensemble grows out of an acanthus plant base and becomes a three-nozzle lamp at the top (Fig. 12.11).<sup>44</sup>

The lowest register of the podium is the eeriest of all, playing with framing effects to unsettle the viewer's expectations. On the left, Hercules sits on an upturned basket within an aedicula, holding a shovel; he has just cleaned out the Augean stables. This image seems to have repeated a sculpture by Lysippus that stood on the Capitol in Rome, but which was both miniaturised and translated into relief to appear here, and also set within elaborately nested frames.<sup>45</sup> Hercules is framed within the aedicula, within the podium wall, within the depicted mausoleum, within the crane relief, within its room and within the Tomb of the Haterii—several miles away from the Capitol in Rome, where the presence of Lysippus' sculpture was itself the outcome of layers of appropriation and recontextualisation. Hercules may offer protective iconography here, recalling his rescue of Alcestis from the underworld, but his image also operates in relation to the very similar aedicula depicted to the right, on the other side of the open door – and standing empty. Now there is only the frame. The viewer is led to ask: who or what was meant to appear inside that empty aedicula? One answer may be Hateria, in a future, heroised guise. If so, her appearance here is left to the future and to the viewer's imagination to see; vision itself is made intermedial and a matter of time.

If the aedicula at bottom right lacks an expected figure, the open door in the centre has one too many: someone looks out from inside the burial chamber. The state of the carving makes this figure difficult to identify, but it may be Hateria herself.<sup>46</sup> If so, she is configured as standing well outside the realm of mortal representation, intricately framed within a wall of hybrid figures, ornament that takes over the

<sup>44</sup> Vatican Museums, Museo Gregoriano Profano, Sezione X, inv. 10015. Sinn and Freyberger 1996, cat. 14, 85–88, figs. 13 and 14, Plates 34–37.

<sup>45</sup> On the Lysippus statue in Rome and its connection to this Hercules, see Dörig 1957. The lost inscription of Q. Haterius Tychicus refers to a statue of Hercules and an aedicula, which may be echoed here (a connection noted by Cavedoni 1850, 160; references at n. 23). On funerary depictions of Hercules, see Andreae 1963, 49–56. On Alcestis in funerary art, see Zanker and Ewald 2004, 297–301.

<sup>46</sup> Several scholars have seen a veiled woman here and have interpreted her as the deceased Hateria, either escaping the tomb or waiting for rescue by Hercules, as a new Alcestis. (Haarlov 1977, 41; Wrede 1978, 423–424; W. M. Jensen 1978, 175). On closed and open doors in Roman funerary art, see Andreae 1963; Haarlov 1977; Davies 1978.





**Fig. 12.11:** Pilaster from the Tomb of the Haterii depicting the four seasons vertically stacked within twining vegetal ornament that rises from an acanthus base to a blazing lamp at the top. Marble; 2.41 × 0.91 × 0.42 m; late Trajanic or early Hadrianic.

centre, and a multiply translated image of Hercules. The door itself offers no solution: it marks the barrier between the living and the dead, but is shown open and permeable. It is placed off centre in the wall and is itself made up entirely of framing devices, with heavy lintel and jambs, and double doors of three framed panels each. The top panel's bust recalls the busts seen elsewhere on the crane relief and the Tomb of the Haterii; the knockers on the middle and lower panels are simultaneously conventional and a stimulus for unanswerable questions. Who knocks at such a door? And who answers? Roman tombs were, we think, empty and locked up when the family

was not visiting. Was the viewer ‘knocking’ – registering her presence, requiring a response – by virtue of looking? And if so, was this emotional viewing what ‘opened’ the door to the realm between the living and the dead, i. e. to memory? Space itself was turned inside out in the process of viewing and responding.<sup>47</sup> Viewers entered the tomb and moved progressively deeper into it to reach the crane relief; there, they focused their attention on its small, intricate details, only to see a massive crane and mausoleum depicted from the outside and including an open door with a person on the inside. And that open door asked viewers to imagine the space on the other side, even while making it impossible to see. Here again, as in the scene depicted on the crane relief’s upper right, sculptural techniques created a powerful visual experience of ambiguous boundaries between life and death, and between death and memory.

## *Mise en abyme*

All these plays of repetition, intermediality and framing are drawn into an extensive use of *mise en abyme*, both on the crane relief and throughout the Tomb of the Haterii. *Mise en abyme* here refers to the image depicted within the image. This embedded image, or metapicture, is not necessarily formally identical to the larger image, but it somehow informs or complicates its viewing.<sup>48</sup> *Mise en abyme* can engage viewers in a number of ways, for example, by creating playful connections or awe-inspiring ambiguities, or by commenting on the artist’s own craft.<sup>49</sup> The crane relief and indeed the whole Tomb of the Haterii play with images within images within images. In these embedded repetitions, the crane relief collapses distinctions between figure and ornament, calling attention instead to connections between images, things and people, and creating for the viewer a space of grief and commemoration.

For example, the two aediculae just discussed were buildings carved onto the podium wall of a mausoleum, itself a representation on a carved relief that was installed and seen within an actual mausoleum, which had aediculae built into its internal architecture and around the portraits of its founders (Figs. 12.5 and 12.6). Or

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<sup>47</sup> On Roman funerary art as problematising issues of inside and outside, including through its use of doors, see Platt 2012.

<sup>48</sup> Explorations of *mise en abyme* have developed separately in literature (e.g. Dällenbach 1989; White 2001) and in art – e.g. mediaeval art (Whatling 2009), early modern painting (Stoichita 1997) and ancient art (Marconi 2011; Gensheimer 2015; cf. Elsner’s chapter in this volume). On metapictures, see Mitchell 1994, 35–82.

<sup>49</sup> Stoichita 1997, for example, understands *mise en abyme* as a phenomenon of painterly self-referentiality (cf. now the discussion also in Platt and Squire 2017, 59–74 – exploring the Graeco-Roman ancestry). For mediaeval art, Whatling 2009 stresses its role in ritualising the life of the object. Elsner’s chapter in this volume explores repetition and *mise en abyme* in strigillation on sarcophagi. On the range of functions of *mise en abyme* in ancient art, see Gensheimer 2015.

consider the intermedial plant life on the crane relief – vegetal ornament running up the pilasters, garlands held between Amores or eagles, leafy branches at upper left – that echoed the leafy branch on the priestess relief (Fig. 12.7) and the garlands, vegetal-form lampstands and huge acanthus leaf on the *collocatio* relief (Fig. 12.8). All these echoed any actual garlands or flowers brought by visitors, as well as the living plants and flowers in the garden of the Tomb of the Haterii.<sup>50</sup> This intricate play of *mise en abyme* made the crane relief much more than a rich treasury of miniaturised ornament: its depictions were in dialogue with other images and objects within the tomb and beyond. On this relief, *mise en abyme* asked the viewer not only to look at the images and determine what they referred to but also to consider the relationships between these intermedial repetitions.

We can trace the workings of *mise en abyme* in the repeated, intermedial imagery of lamps and light.<sup>51</sup> This imagery played an ornamental and framing role but was also central to the funerary experience. At top centre of the crane relief is depicted a massive candelabrum to the left of Hateria's couch, so ornate that it has its own relief decoration; it frames and lights the depicted interior of the tomb. Two more candelabra are depicted on the display wall on the far right, on either side of the statue of Hateria as Venus. These candelabra are ornamental surface relief; they also frame the statue of Hateria; they further blur these boundaries in that both the candelabra and her statue are tall, slender, upright shapes. The flames of all these candelabra are blazing, as are the flames of the altar tended by the stooping woman between them, as are the flames of the altar depicted in the tomb garden at the base of the monumental stairs – all as though freshly tended. This imagery of blazing light extends throughout the Tomb of the Haterii, often in framing positions. On the lintel block framing the main entrance, Ceres holds a flaming torch (Fig. 12.2). Candelabra frame both sides of the founding inscription (Fig. 12.4) and the priestess relief (Fig. 12.7). They frame the *collocatio* scene, with multiple lampstands placed around the bier (Fig. 12.8). Indeed, on that relief, the figure built into the leftmost lampstand pours fuel into the nozzle of the lamp; the image guarantees not only perpetual light but also the necessary work of tending and refilling lamps. Even more strictly 'ornamental' carvings from the Tomb of the Haterii participate, as on the pilaster whose surface depicts an elaborate lamp supported by vegetal ornament and vertically stacked figures of the seasons, ending in three blazing nozzles at the top (Fig. 12.11).<sup>52</sup> This pilaster was simultaneously an architectural support, a surface covered with sculptural ornament, and yet another source of fictive, permanent light in the tomb.

<sup>50</sup> I thank Michael Squire for pointing out the connection between plants depicted inside and the garden outside; he notes that the original colour would have made these connections even more visible.

<sup>51</sup> On ancient thinking about lamps and light, see Bielfeldt 2014 and 2016.

<sup>52</sup> For references, see above, n. 44.

At one level, this was simply a conventional representation of lamps in a tomb. At another level, the intermedial and framing repetitions of blazing flames shaped the space, mood and ritual observances there. Modern viewers see the crane relief only in the steady, electric light of a museum, a projector, or a photograph, but whoever visited the Tomb of the Haterii saw this relief only in the flickering light of actual lamps and flames. None of these depicted lights could be seen without the help of real lamps, lit for the occasion, and their light, like the presence of a viewer, was essential to the functioning of the carvings. In the light of those actual flames, the represented flames roared to life. And that flickering actual light surely deepened the shadows around the deeply carved portrait busts of Hateria and the children on the mausoleum, and the deeply carved children's bodies playing at upper right; it surely made the crane's deeply carved labourers and treadmill flicker in their depicted movements. Actual and depicted light collaborated, part of this funerary sculpture's complex play of viewing and absorption.

## Conclusions

In this chapter I have explored the crane relief from the Tomb of the Haterii and the intricate effects its figural and ornamental details created through intermediality, framing and *mise en abyme*. What we call 'ornament' was essential to these effects. These sculptural techniques drew viewers in; the more closely someone looked, the more there was to see and the more powerful the viewing experience. Bereaved viewers were drawn into the enchantment of a familiar and also unfamiliar world at the edges of the here and now, their memories activated in particular ways by these images. This emotional viewing experience was also temporary, inevitably ending with a move away from this evocative world and back to everyday life. For a time only, the crane relief offered absorption and possibility, blurring the boundaries of time and space, presence and memory.

This visual richness created connections to broader social and cultural practices. Indeed, three different kinds of transformation were interwoven on the crane relief and in the Tomb of the Haterii more broadly. First was the transformation from life to death. The iconography of funerary ritual spoke to this transformation; so did the creation of ambiguous visual experiences between representation and memory. These shaped the viewer's experience within the tomb and mediated the transition from life to death through memory. Second, social transformation similarly permeated the crane relief and the tomb as a whole. The details of status proclaimed on the founding inscription, the freedmen's caps on the crane and *collocatio* reliefs, the honorific presentation of Hateria and her children all testified to the move from slavery to freedom, mediated here by the projection of descent lines through both children and freedpeople. The third kind of change was sculptural. The crane relief thematised the trans-

formation of solid stone into imagery with the power to engage the viewer's eye and emotions, a transformation mediated by representational ambiguities and blurred categories. The carving played with ontological slippage between depicted and actual objects, between permanent ritual actions depicted in the imagery and their regular repetitions in real life, between what was made visible before the viewer's eye and what was in the viewer's imagination.

In all these ways, the crane relief explored the simultaneous existence of rigidly ordered categories, in life as well as in art, and the possibility – or impossibility – of moving between them. For ancient viewers, the carving depicted and also questioned the nature of death and commemoration, the social status of the person, and the possibilities of visual representation. For modern viewers, looking closely at the interactions of figure and ornament in the Tomb of the Haterii illuminates the ways in which the sculpture made visible all of the above.

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Jaś Elsner

## Ornament, figure and *mise en abyme* on Roman sarcophagi\*

For Janet Huskinson

Figure and ornament are two elements of Roman art endlessly repeated across the many media and genres of Roman image-making.<sup>1</sup> This process of replication and the multifarious ways it is used for decorative embellishment, means that it is rather artificial to separate the two.<sup>2</sup> When there are paintings or reliefs that adorn the surfaces of monuments (exteriors, interiors, fronts, sides and backs – with the decision not to adorn any one face in itself decoratively significant), both figure and ornament are intrinsic parts of an empire-wide visual system that makes all kinds of replicative claims to collective culture, identity, sovereignty and power.<sup>3</sup>

The role of replication in Roman art is one of the oldest, and currently still one of the hottest, topics in the subject. From the great fields of *Meisterforschung* and *Kopienkritik* of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (which over-emphasised Roman secondariness in relation to the priority of lost Greek models), to the new early twenty-first-century orthodoxy of ‘emulation’ (which preserves the Roman–

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1 By ‘ornament’ I mean here non-figural decorative framing – at any rate, in much of Roman art. For discussion of the historiography, cf. Squire’s introduction to this volume – with Neer’s chapter in particular. On the distinctive language of Roman *ornamenta*, see Barham’s chapter in this volume, along with the contributions by Platt, Reinhardt and Trimble.

2 I have deliberately put this in a low-key and understated way, since this is a short chapter about a few sarcophagi. But let me be clear: it constitutes a fundamental rejection of the assumptions formulated by Immanuel Kant about *parerga*, ‘ornaments’ that function ‘externally as a complement’ to the main thing ‘for example, the frames of pictures or the draperies of statues or the colonnades around palaces’ (see Kant 1987, 72, with particularly rich discussion and bibliography in Platt and Squire 2017, esp. 38–59; cf. Squire’s introduction to this volume, 18–20, along with Neer, 206–209, Platt, 241–242, 252–253 and Barham, esp. 280–283). Beyond even Derrida’s deconstruction of the Kantian *parergon* (Derrida 1987, 15–147), I want to assert that there is only *representation* at play – neither figure nor ornament, neither centre nor periphery, but just an endlessly replicative, but formally and typologically relatively limited parade of visual signs that Roman art at any rate constantly rearranged and reformulated in something closer to a ‘life of forms’ (see Focillon 1942, a topic on which I am grateful to Nadia Ali for discussion).

3 For recent and interesting reflections on ornament, see – in addition to Squire’s introduction to this volume – the special volume of *Perspective* (2010) on ‘ornement/ornemental’; Hölscher 2009 (now supplemented by Hölscher’s chapter in this volume); Beyer and Spies 2011. A classic account remains Camille 1992, 9–56.

Greek relationship but gives agency and value to Roman appropriations), there has been (perhaps too much) emphasis on models and copies or variants, rather than the free play of repeated motifs (including both figures and all kinds of decorative forms) that ultimately replicate each other in a riot of ornament.<sup>4</sup> In particular, the great corpora of Roman art – where there is some possibility of quantitative statistical analysis as well as qualitative discussion (I am thinking of sarcophagi in particular and also Roman wall-painting) – offer rich decorative replications from the smallest of repeated motifs to whole replicated iconographies, which may be argued to have had significant impact on viewers by their very referencing and reiterating of normative visual themes. One area where this had some impact was in the realm of visual memory.<sup>5</sup> But another lies in mortuary art where repetition of commemorative monumental types (ash urns, sarcophagi, funerary altars, funerary reliefs and so on) alongside the repetition of the kinds of ornament most frequently found on such objects (from portraits via wreaths to architectural elements) ultimately may be thought to comment on the repetition of death itself as an endless and unavoidable replication, even if the carcass, bones or ashes now in a memorial casket were once the basis of an individual.<sup>6</sup>

In this chapter I want to look at this aspect of replication by exploring what I shall call *mise en abyme* (returning to an aspect already discussed by Jennifer Trimble, in the context of the Tomb of the Haterii: 346–348).<sup>7</sup> This, in my use of the term here, is when one element or motif within a decorative surface (strigillation, say, or the use of garlands) replicates, or alludes, to and hence potentially comments on, other elements in the same object or the class of objects in which it occurs. But the trope is profound in Roman art, especially in the relation of framed panels and framing schemes in wall-painting, and it extends to figures no less than to ornament, for example, in

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<sup>4</sup> *Meisterforschung* and *Kopienkritik*: Furtwängler 1893; Lippold 1923; Ridgway 1984 with Hallett 1995; and discussions of the issues in Junker, Stähli and Kunze 2008 and Squire 2011, esp. 372–375. Emulation: Gazda 2002; Perry 2005; Kousser 2008. Seriality: Marvin 1993; Anguissola 2005; Settis 2015. Replication: Trimble 2011; Anguissola 2012. For discussion of all these themes, see also Reinhardt's chapter in this volume – as well as the chapters by Barham (on Roman cultural ideas of the 'ornamental') and Platt (discussing Roman wall-painting).

<sup>5</sup> See e.g. Elsner and Squire 2016.

<sup>6</sup> See Platt 2012, esp. 213–218 on tombs as frames (further expanded and elaborated in her chapter in Platt and Squire (eds.) 2017); cf. also Trimble's chapter in this volume.

<sup>7</sup> The term comes from literary criticism: see the discussion of Dällenbach 1989. However, in the passage from Andre Gide (of 1893) with which Dällenbach opens, where he claims the concept was used for the first time, Gide begins by referring to the use of mirrors in paintings by Memling, Metzys and Velasquez, before moving on to literary examples such as the play within a play in *Hamlet*: cf. Dällenbach 1989, 10–12, citing Gide 1943, 44–45. The trope extends all the way back to the beginnings of Greek literature: cf. Squire 2013 on the Homeric 'shield of Achilles' ecphrasis (esp. 165–179 on the ensuing visual replications of the literary *mise en abyme* in Graeco-Roman art).

such popular themes as Narcissus gazing at himself.<sup>8</sup> This specific quality of self-referentiality (not by any means an uncommon feature of the visual life of Roman sarcophagi) is itself a subset of a bigger thematic whereby such repeated elements effectively bring to mind (and reflect on) the more general use of such themes and motifs not just on the specific object itself but within the whole corpus of similar objects. Stylistic aspects of this kind of replication and valuation in Roman art have in the past been interpreted as a means of communication, even as a visual language,<sup>9</sup> but arguably it is much less systematic than a semantic or linguistic system and rather more restricted in the range of motifs employed. Rather than a linguistic system of semantic communication, I would argue that a much better analogy for the workings of Roman art is the discursive workings of Roman rhetoric – also a system of limited tropes, motifs and figures deployed within highly conventional forms to make an extraordinary range of diverse and sometimes highly original works of literary art.<sup>10</sup>

Now, in my model, *mise en abyme* is a *formal* replicative device that has the quality of reflexivity in relation to the object it decorates.<sup>11</sup> The significance of such reflexivity in relation to the object(s) on which it reflects is not *only* formal. It is generative of meaning at the point of viewing. The range of meanings in ancient Roman art and culture are not easily determined since some are culturally coded in ways to which we may no longer have access, and some may always have been subjective. Nor is it my intention to try to determine the culture's deeper reflexes for the generation of meaning. Nonetheless, in the context of objects made to commemorate a death and whose form contains the deceased, there are at least some constraints within which meaning is likely to have been controlled. However, it is my aim here – using the example of sarcophagi – to suggest that replicative formalism in the production of Roman art was in fact capable of generating the means for the creation of meaning in Roman culture.

The great number – indeed ubiquity – of Roman sarcophagi and their very familiarity to students of Roman art, which can lead to a kind of taking for granted and even contempt, belie the poignancy of each individual item. For each was set up, at some considerable expense and effort,<sup>12</sup> as a memorial to a life and as the marker of an absence. These objects – whether carved specially or bought off the shelf, whether adorned with images of the deceased (individualised finished portraits or ones with

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<sup>8</sup> See Elsner 2007, 132–176 for discussion.

<sup>9</sup> Notably Hölscher 2004.

<sup>10</sup> See especially Elsner 2014a. For two new and vibrant discussions of *mise en abyme* in Roman relief sculpture, see the chapters by Reinhardt and Trimble in this volume.

<sup>11</sup> See Dällenbach 1989, 41–54 on reflexivity (although talking of texts).

<sup>12</sup> See now Russell 2013, 256–310. For a useful overview of the economics of Roman art (but with no discussion of sarcophagi), see Harris 2015. On questions of the market, see Galinier 2013; on issues of production, see Huskinson 2015, 35–62.

blank and unfinished faces)<sup>13</sup> or with no representation of the dead person – were a permanent reminder of loss and a claim for memory that would last as long as the stone of the coffin itself would last.<sup>14</sup> Yet, in their denotation of a specific bereavement within a family, sarcophagi are remarkably replicative and hence generalising in their iconographies and visual narratives – as if buying the deceased into a world of conventional socialisation whether in the mythologies or the cultural tropes of the Roman empire, a world that has been memorably defined as one of ‘culture and classicism’.<sup>15</sup>

The Roman sarcophagus – as a unique form of consolatory commemoration which includes the dead body inside its structure,<sup>16</sup> and which mimics that body in shape<sup>17</sup> – always has the potential for a kind of *mise en abyme*: its monumental and visual rhetorics – so permanent because in stone – merge into the emptiness of the absence they both contain and deny. In this chapter I want to explore this issue of the intrinsic emotional resonance of the sarcophagus, like a bandaged wound that remains tender, by extending the memorial logic of the coffin containing a corpse to examine certain features of *mise en abyme* in the decorative language of the ways in which Roman sarcophagi are articulated. I want to look at ways in which the ornamental discourse of coffin decoration calls into question its relations with its own materiality, the visual systems within which that operates and the body it contains.

In the context of sarcophagi, figural decoration in human form always carries a potential reference to the no-longer-fully-human remains of the being that was once alive and that is now within the casket. And all forms of ornamentation (figural and ‘decorative’) themselves cover the blank space of the casket’s exterior, calling attention to a *horror vacui* which is itself potentially metaphorical of the *horror vacui* of absence and loss that is defined by the presence of the remains within the box. The sarcophagus, as consolatory monument, is already a kind of ornament of the dead person within it, as well as a figural *mimêsis* of his or her shape in its very form. Its relief decoration (sometimes gilded, often painted we may presume) was a further series of ornaments for the monumental memorial, which in different ways steered viewers’ grief, consoled them for their loss and delivered an encomium for the figure within. The recession of decorative *mise en abyme* I shall discuss is itself structured by the very hierarchy of relief ornament, funerary monument and dead body, in which each element potentially comments on the others. It may be that within the funerary

<sup>13</sup> On blank heads, see Engemann 1973, 76–78; Andrae 1984; Huskinson 1998; Birk 2013, 55–58; Russell 2013, 301–307; Elsner forthcoming a.

<sup>14</sup> On funerary display and context, see Borg 2013, 213–240; Meinecke 2014; Huskinson 2015, 63–73. On funerary cult, see Meinecke 2013.

<sup>15</sup> See Nock 1946, esp. 166.

<sup>16</sup> For consolation see e.g. Lorenz 2011 and Newby 2014.

<sup>17</sup> See Elsner 2012, 179–180.

structure of body, coffin, monument and decoration we should not accord primacy to any one element (such as the deceased person's corpse).

In what follows, I will open by looking at *mise en abyme* in a single case study of a garland sarcophagus, and from there move to various broader reflections focusing on strigillation. First, I will consider the relation of strigillated columns alongside strigillated panels in a large group of Roman sarcophagi. Then I will move to strigillated caskets with figural *mise en abyme* (in the case of the image of Narcissus looking at his own reflection), before turning to examine the specific isolation of deity figures (Dionysus and Jesus) in aedicules with strigillated columns at the centre of five panel sarcophagi with bands of strigillated ornament. Finally, I shall return to the theme of *images* of strigillated items (vases and sarcophagi themselves) within the decorative narrative of sarcophagus reliefs, that appear to comment self-reflexively on the whole genre of this class of monument, its decoration and the specific casket on which they have been carved. My conclusion will attempt to broaden these very close-focused analyses into a larger reflection on the nature of Roman image-making.

## *Mise en abyme* in a single sarcophagus

As a starting-point, consider a sarcophagus of c. AD 160, which survives in relatively poor condition, without a lid (whose decoration would obviously have made a difference to the resonances of the whole), in the Palazzo Pallavicini-Rospigliosi in Rome (Fig. 13.1).<sup>18</sup> On either side of the front, two male nude putti face each other holding a garland with a winged Medusa head as a kind of mask in the space above the garland. In the centre – flanked by these motifs – is an image of a robed woman,<sup>19</sup> without an individualised portrait, one presumes intended to be the deceased, who reclines on a couch with a bird, conceivably an eagle, by her head (Fig. 13.2). The base of the couch is made of two winged griffins facing outwards at each leg and a naked Eros in the centre in a dancing posture holding two garlands, one in each hand, that extend from the wings of the griffins at the couch's legs. These garlands have circular paterae above them. The reclining figure emulates – in a commemorative form that evokes her in life – her own dead body also reclining inside the casket but no longer sitting up frontally or addressing a viewer with her gaze. It may be that she lies on her deathbed and the eagle is about to take off to signal apotheosis, or she may lie in an idealised image of her former life, with the bird as a pet: this is unclear, and both intimations may be in play. At any rate, there is a great deal of winged imagery

<sup>18</sup> Found in Ostia: see Herdejürgen 1996, no. 127; Amedick 1991, no. 212; also – briefly – Birk 2013, 131, and no. 537.

<sup>19</sup> At least I *think* from the photograph that it is a woman – and I follow Herdejürgen 1996.



Fig 13.1: Marble sarcophagus, c. AD 160. From Rome, now in the Palazzo Pallavicini-Rospigliosi.



Fig. 13.2: Marble sarcophagus in Palazzo Pallavicini-Rospigliosi, detail.

here, much of it mythological (Medusa and the griffins) as well as the eagle, implying perhaps a desire to take off, an aspiration to abandon earthly interment. We may add that there is a plethora of ribbons swirling about the putti, the garlands and beneath the Gorgons' heads. The base of her couch replicates the iconography of the coffin as a whole – wings, garlands, putti, motifs that fill the spaces above the garlands. Her couch becomes a variant replication of the whole sarcophagus, its intimations of death and potential apotheosis effectively playing to the bigger theme of the coffin but also putting it into question through a kind of miniature reiteration by the technique of *mise en abyme*. The whole set of decorative choices effectively sets up a self-referential game that interrogates gently and poignantly (in the context of mourning and consolation) the theme of dying, death and apotheosis.

The gorgoneia – threatening petrification to their viewers – themselves play on whether the stone image of the deceased on the base is more or less dead, more or less petrified, than the corpse itself.<sup>20</sup> There is always a potential joke in the Gorgon's head (which turned its viewers into stone)<sup>21</sup> being made from stone, and arguably represented as itself petrified, since usually becoming stone is what results from confrontation with a Gorgon. In this case, since the Gorgon's head is duplicated, one example might be seen as an image of the original and the other as a representation of its replica, frozen in stone by confrontation with the original – but we cannot decide which of the two has the priority; indeed, for a Gorgon's head to be petrified by Medusa, two original Gorgons, each petrifying the other, is surely implied. Since this issue touches on the making of art (no art is as lifelike as the statuary forged from life into stone by the sight of Medusa), the *mise en abyme* of replicative gorgoneia is also an interrogation of the nature of artistry in this object and in the embellishment of all sarcophagi, a theme of repeated insistence in figural decoration on sarcophagi since so much of it puts its figures on pedestals as if they were statues. This kind of play effectively offers in figural form reflections on the replication of other motifs such as garlands and putti. We may ask, moreover, what is at stake in the place of the Gorgons' heads being taken by paterae in the imagery below the couch? Are the stone-frozen intimations of Medusa what replaces the ritual action of libation and sacrifice when one moves from the living (in the figure reclining on a couch) to the dead (in the body reclining inside the casket)? The garlands and paterae of the couch imply offerings – perhaps from the reclining woman to the deceased, from her living self to her dead self – or perhaps (like the garlands on the two sides) from the surviving relatives to the dead. Is the couch a bier? Does its figuration at the centre of the sarcophagus' main front work as prefiguration or memorialisation of the coffin on which it is depicted and whose iconography it both borrows and subverts?

<sup>20</sup> For some implications of Gorgon imagery, see e.g. Mack 2002 and Grethlein 2016.

<sup>21</sup> On Ovid's account of this (*Met* 4.663–5.235), see Hardie 2002, 178–186.



Among our surviving sarcophagi, this is a unique object in terms of the intimacy with which its decoration plays self-reflexively on its own themes using these particular iconographic features. Its unusual nature has caused some suspicion that it may have been reworked in the eighteenth century, which would mean that certain aspects of what I have been discussing are the result of modern decorative interventions.<sup>22</sup> Yet all the features themselves are ubiquitous. We have frequent examples of sarcophagi with putti holding garlands,<sup>23</sup> and of gorgoneia over garlands,<sup>24</sup> while there are also (fewer) cases of paterae over garlands,<sup>25</sup> and of griffins and cupids holding garlands or griffins in association with this range of imagery.<sup>26</sup> We may add that there are plenty of variations on this iconography in the sarcophagi made in the east of the empire.<sup>27</sup> So the Pallavicini-Rospigliosi sarcophagus, in casting a miniaturised self-reflection on the imagery within its own surface, simultaneously offers a more general perspective (a kind of object-specific *mise en abyme*) on this whole class of interconnected imagery. To anyone familiar with the range of types, the thematic would have been instantly recognisable.

Thus the Pallavicini-Rospigliosi sarcophagus not only comments on its own imagery, but through doing so both comments on and participates in the general run of the kinds of imagery it uses. This is one of the effects of the replicative model of constructing works of art through given formulae and typological iconographies made up of repeated elements – building a new and unique monument out of a range of known and common ornamental themes. This thematic ubiquity (and by post-Renaissance aesthetic standards the lack of decorative originality) is not only one of the key fea-

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**22** See Herdejürgen 1996, 149; Amedick 1991, 156, and esp. Wrede 1981, 96–99. The case depends on comparison of the Pallavicini-Rospigliosi sarcophagus with a print by Piranesi of the sarcophagus he saw in the Palazzo Governo, published in 1778 (illustrated by Wrede 1981, 98, fig. 15). Piranesi shows no griffins, swags, putti or paterae beneath the *klinê*, but rather an empty *tabula ansata*. There is a variety of options here: one is that the sarcophagus was definitely recut after the 1780s; another is that Piranesi in fact shows a different but similar sarcophagus, now lost; another is that he free associated, since his print must be based on a prior sketch which may not have been fully clear and was anyway not founded on modern or photographic standards of accuracy. Note that other differences between the print and the Pallavicini-Rospigliosi sarcophagus include the heavy rim around all the figural iconography on both the top and bottom, which was certainly never the case in the existing object.

**23** For instance: Herdejürgen 1996, nos. 15, 16, 17, 18, 23, 30, 31, 36, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 56, 58, 59, 60, 61, 63, 64, 65, 70, 71, 73, 76, 77, 80, 84, 88, 91, 93, 94, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 104, 106, 107, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 116, 117, 118, 122, 123, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 131, 132, 133, 134, 137, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 145, 146, 147, 149, 152, 155, 156, 157, 158, 160, 161, 166, 172, 176, 179, 180, 182, 183, 185.

**24** For example: Herdejürgen 1996, nos. 6, 15, 20, 50, 72, 78, 82, 86, 88, 93, 94, 106, 112, 113, 122, 123, 139, 142, 143, 146, 147, 162, 169, 179, 180, 181, 183.

**25** Herdejürgen 1996, nos. 15, 37, 162.

**26** Herdejürgen 1996, nos. 16 (griffins and cupids with garlands); 84, 90, 118, 128, 131 (griffins in connection with the imagery of garlands and cupids).

**27** See e.g. Işık 2007a, nos. 16, 27, 28, 32, 34, 35, 38, 44; also Işık 2007b.

tures of Roman art, but one of the qualities that resonates with (indeed replicates) the ubiquity and universality of death which these monuments address directly, while at the same time offering a specific and perhaps even unique take on this problem, as in this casket.<sup>28</sup>

## Strigillation: Columns and panels

One of the most popular kinds of sarcophagus is the strigillated type – so common that there has never been an attempt at a corpus.<sup>29</sup> Strigillation is that distinctive surface treatment – so common in sarcophagi, including very expensive ones – where a repeated series of curvy fluted lines is cut into the marble to make a ripple effect in relief.<sup>30</sup> There is in fact a kind of *mise en abyme* about the strigillated line itself, which curves back on itself in an ‘S’-shape and in many examples is made to echo in reverse the ‘S’-curves on the other side of the same sarcophagus. Another very common feature of sarcophagi, again so common that no corpus has been attempted,<sup>31</sup> is the use of columns to construct arcades or aedicules across the main decorative face, within which figural scenes or images of statues may be placed; many of these columns are themselves strigillated. By strigillated columns, I mean ones with spiral (as opposed to vertical) fluting, whose visual effects are similarly dynamic, both in surface decoration and relief texturing, to panels of strigillation.<sup>32</sup>

My interest here is the model of using aedicules with strigillated columns in the context of a partly or largely strigillated sarcophagus.<sup>33</sup> For instance, in the Campo Santo at Pisa, there are two examples of this phenomenon. The piece, which has been variously dated to the 160s and the 260s AD (with a fourteenth-century inscription saying *NOCCI CASTILIONIS SEPULCRUM*), is a typical ‘five-panel’ sarcophagus with an aedicule in the centre within which stands a frontal man in a toga with a scrinium for book rolls on the ground to his right (Fig. 13.3). He is flanked by panels of strigillation. To the far left is a man in a tunic facing inwards to a flaming altar, while to

<sup>28</sup> For individuality amidst the schematism in relation to strigillated sarcophagi, see Huskinson 2012, esp. 82.

<sup>29</sup> For brief accounts, see Koch and Sichtermann 1982, 73–76; Ewald 1999a, 335–337; Koch 2000, 45–53; Huskinson 2012, and now esp. Huskinson 2015 for a commanding and scintillating discussion – notably 75–102 on issues of decoration and 103–111 on questions of viewing.

<sup>30</sup> See Huskinson 2015, 8–11.

<sup>31</sup> See Koch and Sichtermann 1982, 76–80, and Koch 2000, 42–45, for brief discussions.

<sup>32</sup> ‘In effect, the panels of curved fluting recall spiral reputed columns rolled out across the flat walls of the sarcophagus’ (Huskinson 2015, 8–9); cf. Chiarlo 1974, 1341, and Turcan 1999, 164.

<sup>33</sup> On the strigil motif and its use in all kinds of Roman decoration, see Gütschow 1931, 113–118, and Huskinson 2015, 20–22, 47–49, 76–80, 92–94; on columns and pilasters, see Huskinson 2015, 24; on aedicules, see Huskinson 2015, 82.



Fig. 13.3: Marble sarcophagus, c. AD 160–170. Now in the Campo Santo, Pisa, but brought there (from Rome?) in mediaeval times.

the right is another frontal man in tunic and pallium also with a bundle of rolls to his right. None of the heads appears to have been finished, although it may be that they are just badly worn.<sup>34</sup> All three figured scenes are on bases, with the implication that they might be statues or are at least distanced from the viewer as potential works of art. The panels of strigillation by contrast expand across their whole allotted space on the casket front, but are encased in frames.<sup>35</sup> Here we are offered a male-centred iconography of ritual practice and *paideia* – the deceased (perhaps depicted three times) defined by his accomplishments in the normative models of self-cultivation among the Roman elite.

A second instance, from a sarcophagus of the Severan period (c. AD 230), has an aedicule containing two young men with fine portrait heads in the centre, both wearing togas, flanked by *scrinia* and with the youth on the left holding a roll (Fig. 13.4).<sup>36</sup> This scene has panels of strigillation to either side, with female and male figures at the left and right ends, both frontal with unfinished heads, and the latter in military dress. All the figures stand on bases, but this time the panels of strigillation have no frame to left and right, being cut off abruptly by the figured scenes, although they are elaborately framed at top and bottom.<sup>37</sup> In this instance, the figures consistently refuse constraint by their frames – the boys' heads edge against the roof of the aedicule, the arm and cloak of the one on the left overlapping the strigillated column that is meant to contain him. The robes of the woman to the far left transgress the abrupt ending of the strigillation and appear to flow into and merge with it, while the man on the far right gestures over and into the strigillated patterning that encroaches upon him to his right hand side, while his left shoulder and cloak overlap and emerge out of the squared niche in which he is placed. This casket is a *lenos* in form that has lions' heads with rings through them (like faux handles or door knockers) at the back (Fig. 13.5).<sup>38</sup> It may be that this group is a family though it is not clear now if the young sons were commemorated before (and therefore by) their parents, whose heads were intended for portraits that they never received, or whether it was the sons as donors who had their heads carved, leaving their deceased parents in a state of perpetual blankness. These last questions make this a particularly interesting and problematic sarcophagus in thinking about its life history or object biography.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Mont Allen tells me that he and Sarah Madole recently re-examined this piece in Pisa (in 2016) and concluded firmly that the heads were unfinished rather than just worn.

<sup>35</sup> See Arias et al. 1977, no. C8 est.; Ewald 1999b, no. F 5 (57 and 188); Reinsberg 2006, no. 55; Huskinson 2015, 135–136. All agree on a later third-century dating, except for Reinsberg who suggests AD 160–170. Generally, on borders and frames for panels of strigillation, see Huskinson 2015, 94–97.

<sup>36</sup> Generally, for portraiture on strigillated sarcophagi, see Huskinson 2015, 117–145.

<sup>37</sup> See Arias et al. 1977, no. B1 est.; Reinsberg 2006, no. 54; Andrae 1984, 110–111; Borg 2013, 198 and 204; Huskinson 2015, 54–55.

<sup>38</sup> See Stroszeck 1998, no. 50.

<sup>39</sup> See Huskinson 2011, 61–64 and 73.



Fig. 13.4: Marble sarcophagus in lenos form (front), c. AD 230. Now in the Campo Santo, Pisa, but brought there (from Rome?) in mediaeval times.



Fig. 13.5: Back view of the same sarcophagus.

Now, in both these cases we have an interesting play between the strigillated surface – moving, repetitive, without particular or differentiating features – and the attempt through columns, capitals and cornice to freeze a particular image of the deceased. Yet through their own strigillated ornamentation the columns comment on the strigillated panels and vice versa. There are many other examples in both pagan and Christian sarcophagi of this form of genuflection to the bigger decorative patterning of the base by the use of strigillated decoration on columns.<sup>40</sup> These objects bring into sharp focus a play of parallel ornamental choices within different replicative elements of the decorative surface of single sarcophagi. But given the large numbers of such objects in antiquity (and even surviving into modernity) – with strigillation on columns even in caskets without strigillated panels and on panels in caskets without columns – the phenomenon may be thought also to offer sideways glances, playful allusions, comments on and to the general class of such objects. *Mise en abyme* within a single example in fact raises issues of self-reflection across the entire corpus.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> E.g. Pesce 1957, no. 20; Bovini and Brandenburg 1967, nos. 83, 569, 658, 688, 921, 927; Matz 1975, nos. 290[?] (the central section cut out so we have only the aedicule), 306; Arias et al. 1977, nos. B 1 int. and C11 est.; Kranz 1984, no. 189; Sichtermann 1992, nos. 12, 13, 16; Reinsberg 2006, nos. 23 and 53.

<sup>41</sup> It is rare to be able to nuance such general considerations against known archaeological context.

A variation of the choice to place strigillation beside strigillated columns is the decision instead to use fluted columns.<sup>42</sup> Here there is significant similarity of ornamental choices – regular grooves incised into the flat marble surface – but with the option taken in the columns to go straight rather than curved. Given the culture of strigillated columns on sarcophagi, the decision to use vertically fluted ones – especially in conjunction with panels of strigillation – is a distinctive case of conscious structural differentiation. One may say the same again for columns with no decoration.<sup>43</sup> An interesting example, also in Pisa, from the late second century, has a strigillated front with a strigillated column at either end (Fig. 13.6). In the centre and raised on a pedestal, above the lower border of the strigillated banding to either side, is an aedicule with fluted columns and tritons above the roofing, in which stands a couple in *dextrarum iunctio* (one takes it the pair intended to be buried in the coffin)<sup>44</sup> with Concordia between them and a small Hymenaeus by their feet.<sup>45</sup> The figures are very worn. The use of the various forms of decoration – aedicule with fluted columns, strigillated panels and strigillated columns – constructs a complex hierarchy of framing. The larger strigillated columns at the ends frame the entire facade, the ‘S’-shapes of the strigillated panels radiate towards the central group, and the aedicule with its differentiated architectural decoration raises the figures depicted above and away from as well as within the larger decorative surface.

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But a fine mid-third-century ‘aedicule with an open door’ strigillated sarcophagus with four strigillated columns, now in the American Protestant Church (St Paul’s) in Rome, was found alongside three high-quality figured examples – showing Dionysiac themes, the Muses and a hunting scene – all from different moments in the third century, in the tomb of the Sempronii in Rome. In this case, the specific *mise en abyme* does not seem to have played out across the range of items used in the tomb. See Borg 2013, 126–130; Meinecke 2014, no. B11, 89–90, 237–240.

**42** E.g. Matz 1975, nos. 282, 283, 285, 286, 303, 312, 313 (also – these are central sections cut out so as only to preserve the aedicule and not certainly from strigillated sarcophagi – 288, 289, 291, 310); Arias et al. 1977, C 7 est., C 9 int., D 4 int.; Kranz 1984, 167, 189, 400; Sichtermann 1992, 18; Stroszeck 1998, no. 205; Reinsberg 2006, nos. 35, 53, 56, 67, 109, 112.

**43** E.g. Bovini and Brandenburg 1967, nos. 69, 87, 221, 397, 536, 568, 652 (if we trust the drawing), 659, 678, 778, 870; Matz 1975, nos. 44, 296, 308 and 309 (if we trust the drawings of the last two); Arias et al. 1977, nos. A 6 int., A 8 est., C 10 int.; Sichtermann 1992, nos. 11[?] (if correctly drawn), 14, 17; Reinsberg 2006, nos. 51, 139, 150.

**44** On this motif on sarcophagi (including in strigillated examples), see Reekmans 1958; Huskinson 2012, 84–91; Studer-Karlen 2012, 107–115.

**45** See Arias et al. 1977, no. A19 int.; Reinsberg 2006, no. 53. Cf. Bovini and Brandenburg 1967, no. 83 and Arias et al. 1977, D 3 int. for a similar configuration of columns and strigillation; for fluted and plain columns, see Arias et al. 1977, C 8 int. and C 18 int. (an interesting Good Shepherd).





Fig. 13.6: Marble sarcophagus, c. AD 190–200. Now in the Campo Santo, Pisa, but brought there (from Rome?) in mediaeval times.



## Figural *mise en abyme*: The example of the double Narcissus

In an example from the Vatican of the first half of the third century AD, the central aedicule – with no decoration on its columns – has a couple in *dextrarum iunctio* with no base but with a small winged Hymenaeus holding a torch between them, who looks out at the viewer, unlike all the other figures on the casket (Fig. 13.7).<sup>46</sup> Both figures have unfinished heads and are fully draped, the man carrying a scroll. In the pediment of the aedicule above them, there is a wreath and on its roof are hippocamps with long tails and theatrical masks. To either side panels of strigillation, framed top and bottom but not to left or right, flow in towards the centre. At the ends, to the far left and right, are nude images of Narcissus at the corners, both of them on statue bases, echoing each other in form and mirrored in a stance borrowed from a statue type of Narcissus (with little cupids on the inside alongside them).<sup>47</sup> There are griffins on the two small sides, left and right. Both Narcissi on this casket are disrobed, their clothing draped over the trees that stand between them and the strigillated panels, marking the difference between a natural setting at the ends and an architectural, domestic space imagined for the couple in the centre. The postures of the two cupids are mirrored, both holding elevated torches, and standing over disembodied heads to which they are pointing, that appear to signify the reflected face of Narcissus in the pool, but also play against the theatrical masks of the pediment. Both Narcissi appear to use the same floral ornament in their hair – which itself reverberates against the wreaths in the pediment.

In this case there is a brilliant play of self-reflection, with the strigillated panels taking the place of flowing water and arguably each Narcissus reflecting the other through the eddies of strigillation, as it were, as well as being reflected in the head that lies at his feet. As in the case of the duplicated Gorgons' heads of the Pallavicini-Rospigliosi sarcophagus, which Narcissus is 'real' and which his reflection is impossible to say. What this casket offers is a superb visual version of the supreme literary and mythological *mise en abyme* of antique visuality, with both Narcissi figured as 'statues'. The circularity of these figures' mythical absorption plays with some poignancy and also perhaps a critical edge against the couple in the centre, apparently absorbed in each other.<sup>48</sup> Each figured panel, including the couple, has a naked putto with a lighted torch; the couple standing in the centre are clothed, the two figures at the ends are not only naked, but have taken off their clothes which

<sup>46</sup> See Reinsberg 2006, no. 150; Huskinson 2012, 82–83, 86; Huskinson 2015, 23–25. For Narcissus sarcophagi in general, see esp. Sichtermann 1986; Rafn 1992, esp. nos. 16, 17, 37, 38, 39; Koch and Sichtermann 1982, 167.

<sup>47</sup> See e.g. Zanker 1966, esp. 159–166; Sichtermann and Koch 1975, 47.

<sup>48</sup> So Huskinson 2012, 86.



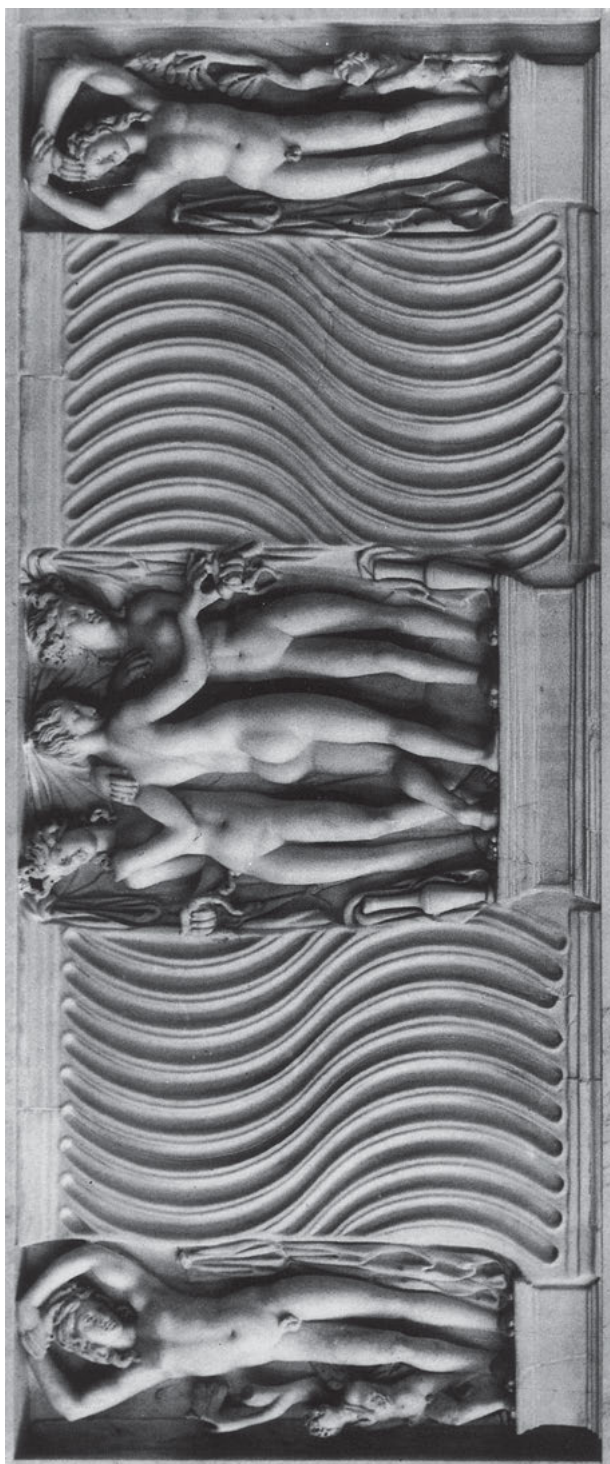
Fig. 13.7: Marble sarcophagus with images of a couple in *dextrarum iunctio* and Narcissus. Vatican Museums, c. AD 250.

remain draped nearby. The pair in the aedicule have unfinished heads, the replicative pair that represent a single mythological figure have finished ideal heads. The couple in *dextrarum iunctio* are framed beneath the pediment and without a base; the Narcissi are elevated on pedestals but without an enclosing entablature above them. Here the couple appear as if in real life (without statue bases) while the Narcissi and their pedestals signal the artifice of sculpture. Yet the Narcissi stand as metaphors for the couple's immersion in love that this eulogistic imagery is surely meant to evoke, and they stand in nature as if entirely natural symbols for this love.

The same formal model of mirrored Narcissi and watery strigillation constitutes the structure of a five-panel sarcophagus with the three Graces in the centre, whose surviving front is now embedded in the stone decoration of Schloss Sanssouci in Potsdam, and which probably dates from the late second century (Fig. 13.8).<sup>49</sup> In this case all the figures stand on bases, the whole group of Graces has a curtain for backing and water pots beside them. Again the disrobed Narcissi with their clothing draped over the trees to the sides are placed in a natural setting, while the curtain suggests a contained domesticity for the Graces. The Narcissi have their arms raised above their heads, following the statue type on which they are modelled, while the Graces have their arms lowered. Cupids stand to the sides of the Narcissi looking up at them, on the very outside edges of the sarcophagus. Clearly nudity, beauty and self-immersion in the strigil-like waters of love are heavily at stake and in play between the male and female figures, with water a suggestive aspect of all the figured scenes, since Narcissus is beside a pool while Graces have attendant jugs; in the context of watery imagery, strigillation certainly has the potential to suggest this theme – particularly in the way the curve of the lower outline of the strigillation falls past the cut-off line of each panel into the space created by the curve of the end of the Narcissis's pedestals. The enmeshing of decorative strigillated panel with figural statue through the flow of strigillation into the indentation made by the statue base at each end of this piece is an excellent example of how this kind of art subverts any lingering reflex to insist on the absolute separation of 'figure' and 'ornament'. The *mise en abyme* of reflective Narcissi in the Sanssouci example is similar to the Vatican sarcophagus, but with the significant difference that there are no reflected heads at the feet of either Narcissus in the Potsdam example. This means that each statue image at the corner of the sarcophagus must be the reflection of the other across the surface of its relief sculpture through the prism of the strigillation and the beauty implied by the Graces.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup> See Sichtermann 1992, no. 159; Zanker and Ewald 2012, 233; Huskinson 2015, 9–11, 168.

<sup>50</sup> Clearly very different issues are at play in those five-panel strigillated sarcophagi where Narcissus appears only at one end of the casket and not at both, for example, MNR no. 124741 (see M. Sapelli in Giuliano 1984, no. XII, 13, 379–380) or the piece in Volterra published by Sichtermann 1986, no. 5.



**Fig. 13.8:** Marble sarcophagus with images of Narcissus and the Graces, now in the Sanssouci Palace at Potsdam. c. AD 190.

I have limited my account of the *mise en abyme* of figural types to strigillated sarcophagi and to the supreme mythological exemplar of the problem.<sup>51</sup> But it is worth remarking briefly that the issue is much broader than this, with many instances of figural *mise en abyme* across the corpus of Roman sarcophagi. For example, briefly, one might mention the great Meleager sarcophagus in the Capitoline Museums where the boar-killing scene in the main front plays against a boar killing conducted by nude putti on the lid, with a putto conducting the death thrust in precise emulation of the hero, while the dogs beside each protagonist are in parallel (Fig. 13.9).<sup>52</sup>

## Strigillation: Aedicules and deities

The particular pattern of a five-panel casket with strigillated sections and a central fluted aedicule is particularly popular in Dionysiac sarcophagi.<sup>53</sup> The ends of such objects usually show a dancing maenad and satyr – in ecstatic worship of the god. In the centre Dionysus stands in revealed majesty – isolated from the rest of the casket in his aedicule, with the strigillated panels radiating out from him as if a flow of rays or perhaps of wine. The god may stand in isolation with attributes such as a panther or a thyrsus,<sup>54</sup> or he may have the company of one or more satyrs.<sup>55</sup> In the fine Proconnesian piece found in Rome about 1740 and now in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge,<sup>56</sup> the maenad dances on her own playing cymbals to the far right, while the satyr on the left end, with a panther skin hanging to his right, carries a child. He has a panther between his feet, as well as the heads of a ram and a goat on the ground beside him (Fig. 13.10). In the centre Dionysus, beneath an aedicule with fluted columns, garlanded and crowning himself with ivy with his left hand, leans on a satyr to his left, who holds a panther skin like the one worn by the dancing satyr in the panel at the left end. Dionysus pours an offering from a kantharos in his right hand onto a ram's head on a pillar-like altar to his right. Behind him, above the altar, stands Pan with a human body but goat's head and legs, and to the right at the bottom is a cista with an emerging snake. Like the satyr on the end, Dionysus has a panther between his legs and in a reverse position from the one at the left end. The god's robe falls almost coquettishly behind him and over his right leg, in emulation

<sup>51</sup> Generally, on mythological groupings on strigillated sarcophagi, see Kirchler 1990.

<sup>52</sup> Koch 1975, no. 12.

<sup>53</sup> For more on strigillated Dionysiac sarcophagi and potential relations with early Christian sarcophagi, see Elsner forthcoming b.

<sup>54</sup> E.g. Matz 1975, 312 (panther and thyrsus), 313 (panther, Silenus mask and female herm).

<sup>55</sup> E.g. Matz 1975, 282, 283, 285, 286, 288, 290, 291, 296, 303, 305, 306, 308, 309.

<sup>56</sup> Matz 1975, 282; Budde and Nicholls 1964, no. 163, 103–104.



**Fig. 13.9:** Marble sarcophagus with the death of Meleager on the base and putti hunting on the lid, c. AD 180–190. From Rome and now in the Capitoline Museums (inv. 822).





Fig. 13.10: Marble sarcophagus with Dionysiac themes found in Rome and now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (inv. GR 46. 1850). Mid third century AD.

of the flowing robes of the maenad, out of which her left leg and naked right breast protrude.

This central group is packed with sacred referents (the god himself, the altar and libation, the cista and snake), the materials of ritual and of initiation as well as the divine being. Yet there are many iconographic correspondences among the figures: the panther skins of the two satyrs; the two panther figures between the legs of the left satyr and the god; the play between the living panthers and the pelts of dead ones; the rams' heads in the left side and in the centre; the decapitated goat's head in relation to Pan's goat's head (which is again a commentary on dead and living, very relevant to a funerary casket); the play of robes and nudity in the god and the maenad; and there are intimations of the senses across the whole casket – the clash of cymbals played by the maenad; the taste and sound of the wine poured by Dionysus; the sense of scent evoked by the altar; the urgency of movement throughout.

In the case of this sarcophagus, the figure scenes are all set off on statue bases with mouldings at the top and bottom, which themselves play on the mouldings of the bases of the fluted pilasters and the Corinthian capitals of the aedicule where the god stands.<sup>57</sup> In other examples, there is no distancing through bases for any of the figures,<sup>58</sup> or only the central group is depicted without a base (as in the Narcissus sarcophagus with a couple in *dextrarum iunctio* in the Vatican: Fig. 13.7).<sup>59</sup> Here, the decorative framing and the use of both aedicule and strigillation to set off the central sacred figure finds a parallel in (or at least resonance with) five-panel Christian sarcophagi, and may indeed have influenced their form. For instance, one might cite the casket found in Apt and now in Avignon which has apostles with scrinia at the left and right ends (perhaps Peter and Paul) facing into the centre, and Christ in a central aedicule with undecorated columns, with scrinium on the ground to the left (Fig. 13.11).<sup>60</sup> Jesus carries a cross and faces a kneeling female figure to the right while making a gesture of blessing with his right hand. He seems to be stepping onto a footstool (or perhaps something offered by the small figure before him, whose left foot deliciously transgresses the frame of the aedicule and the border beneath, as if making a link to the viewer outside of the casket with the sacred image on its surface).<sup>61</sup> As in the Cambridge Dionysiac example, a group including a deity, his acolytes and a range of sacred imagery (in this case, the large cross and the blessing gesture, in the Fitzwilliam example the libation, the altar and the cista) mark out the divine figure in the middle.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Matz 1975, nos. 284, 296, 309.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Matz 1975, nos. 283, 285, 308.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Matz 1975, nos. 286, 306, 312, 313.

<sup>60</sup> See Christern-Briesenick 2003, no. 160. Other examples include aedicules made of trees: Bovini and Brandenburg 1967, nos. 682, 683, 829, 912.1, 990; and aedicules made of cloth: Bovini and Brandenburg 1967, nos. 73, 74, 396, 664, 739, 837.1.

<sup>61</sup> Generally, on the motif of the woman before Christ, see Studer-Karlen 2012, 191–198.





**Fig. 13.11:** Marble sarcophagus with Christian themes, last third of the fourth century AD. From Musée Calvet, Avignon.

In all these cases the formal structure of columns, differently decorated, and panels of strigillation, can be used in a number of ways to set off subjects within a given sarcophagus and in relation to other sarcophagi. The framing possibilities and the option to set out the central scene as one of divine epiphany, with the end scenes indicating worship or mediation, offer a range of intriguing possibilities arising from the ornamental system itself in conjunction with the viewers' needs or demands for particular kinds of subject matter (in the case of both Christ and Dionysus, arguably for some kind of sacred emphasis). My point here, however, is not to get diverted into the rise of Christianity or into pagan religiosity, but simply to emphasise that all this is the result of the decorative logic of playing various replicative possibilities across a very particular and distinctive pictorial surface for ornamentation – namely a casket oblong in form and charged (for its viewers) by the fact that it contains the special remains of a human body. The very games of these sarcophagi, ultimately, play out thinking about the figurative and the ornamental, and above all the relationship between them.

## Strigillation: Images of vases and sarcophagi

In addition to columns, there are other classes of object depicted on sarcophagi whose ornament calls attention to – and responds to – the strigillation of so many of them. One group, mainly of lion-head caskets, has entirely strigillated fronts of symmetrically arranged strigils making a small oval space in the centre – almost a mandorla in the later Christian sense – in which a small image is placed, its size being in some contradiction to its centrality in the visual field.<sup>62</sup> A number of these caskets show vases in this space,<sup>63</sup> and of these some examples are themselves strigillated.<sup>64</sup> A fine lenos at San Martino ai Monti in Rome, from c. AD 250–260,<sup>65</sup> has lions attacking wild boar at either end, with what are apparently trainers for the arena standing behind them and gesticulating, with billowing cloaks (Fig. 13.12a). The main face comprises bands of strigillation that meet in the centre where a fluted pilaster holds up a kantharos with elegant strigillation at the neck (Fig. 13.12b). In this case none of the iconography

<sup>62</sup> On mandorla motifs, see Baratta 2007 and Huskinson 2015, 191–193. A number of such themes represent Christian subjects, raising the issue of whether this formal structure does not in fact lie behind the Christian mandorla in later mediaeval art. See e.g. Stroszeck 1998, nos. 37, 116 (the Good Shepherd), 148, 212 (figures with scrolls), 271 (orant); Wegner 1966, no. 162 (Good Shepherd).

<sup>63</sup> E.g. Stroszeck 1998, nos. 21, 69, 102, 189, 208, 211, 233, 277, 305, 340, 347, 367, 372, 373, 409 (a barrel); Baratta 2007, 207, made a catalogue with 22 barrels (discussion at 210–215), 21 craters and 12 amphorae (all large numbers comparatively within the full corpus).

<sup>64</sup> E.g. Stroszeck 1998, nos. 234 and 332; Wegner 1966, no. 48.

<sup>65</sup> Stroszeck 1998, no. 332.

seems to speak in a clear way to the rest – the lion scenes, the strigillation and the kantharos appear not only to be independent elements (all situated in the appropriate place on the surface of the casket), yet to have no specific or thematic link with each other, as is often the case with such replicative imagery. But it is the very arbitrariness of the (lack of) thematic connections that appears to be signalled by the choice to make a formal link between the strigillation of the front and that of the vase. The same may be said of the example, from roughly the same date, now in the Pierpont Morgan library in New York, except that this has no lion handlers (so that its scenes of lion and boar could be imagined in the wild as well as in the circus) and no column whereon the kantharos sits.<sup>66</sup>

Again the resonance of these vases extends beyond the specific sarcophagi, on which they appear, to the larger range of strigillated vases that are found on other casket types such as the seasons sarcophagi, for instance.<sup>67</sup> If in fact the strigillated vase did have wider seasonal intimations in Roman visual culture, then this would potentially knit the imagery of the whole casket together – incorporating the death show of wild animals in the arena, the flow of strigillation and the seasonal suggestions of the vase in a sense of the movement of time set against the poignancy and potency that all these images relate the death of an individual commemorated inside the monument.

A particularly self-referential use of strigillation on a sarcophagus that is itself not in fact decorated with strigillated panels may be found on the great Adelfia sarcophagus now in Syracuse (Fig. 13.13).<sup>68</sup> Here at the far left of the bottom of the two bands with Biblical themes that decorate the main base, Nebuchadnezzar stands beside his idol (Daniel 3: 1–18) – a bust portrait on a strigillated column with a Corinthian capital (Fig. 13.14). At the far right of the upper zone of decoration, Christ raises from the dead the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7: 11–15) from a strigillated sarcophagus decorated exactly like the fronts of the lion sarcophagi, just discussed, with what may be intended to represent a tiny barrel – in fact the most popular of all such surviving motifs for this kind of sarcophagus – in the mandorla (Fig. 13.15).<sup>69</sup> It may be the child's wrappings were themselves intended to reflect the wrappings of corpses buried inside sarcophagi.<sup>70</sup> The use of strigillation in relation to a long prior visual discourse of sarcophagi is powerful in this object – it directly ties the visual theme to death through the medium

<sup>66</sup> Stroszeck 1998, no. 234.

<sup>67</sup> Kranz 1984, 3, 31 (fluted), 119, 123, 125, 384, 472, 517, 542; Reinsberg 2006, no. 44.

<sup>68</sup> See Greco 1998; Dresken-Weiland 1998, no. 20; briefly Baratta 2007, 208.

<sup>69</sup> Other strigillated sarcophagi represented on sarcophagi, all in versions of the same Christological theme: Bovini and Brandenburg 1967, nos. 40, 527, 776 (a poor survival but the sarcophagus may have been strigillated); Christern-Briesenick 2003, nos. 70, 366, 439. For the iconography of the resurrections of Jairus' daughter and the youth of Nain on sarcophagi, see Nauerth 1980, 5–33 and Koch 2000, 164–165 and 166–167.

<sup>70</sup> For this point in relation to Lazarus imagery, see Meinecke 2014, 129.



**Fig. 13.12a:** Marble lenos sarcophagus with lions and lion tamers at the sides, and strigillation in the main face, c. AD 250–260. From Rome and now at San Martino ai Monti. Detail of the left side.

of decorative strigillation used on this form of monument and hence through the iconography chosen to the theme of Christian resurrection. This act is itself set against the strigillation of a column carrying an idol that defines the paganism from which Christ's incarnation has saved the world.<sup>71</sup> The parallelism of the birth of Jesus on the lid, lying in similar posture to the child of Nain, his head swaddled similarly and in a similar casket, but done as if in wickerwork rather than strigillation, itself emphasises the incarnational motif, again through the use of artefacts and their ornamental decoration, in ways very similar to the play of boar-killings on the Meleager sarcophagus from the Capitoline Museums (Fig. 13.9).<sup>72</sup> On this remarkable casket, pivoting the lower left-hand side of the front against the upper right, strigillation as a self-reflexive *mise en abyme* – that brings to mind a whole world of Roman image-making and through it a whole world of Roman life and culture – defines both idolatry and Christian salvation and functions as a marker for the paganism from which Christianity had saved the world, as well as for resurrection itself.

What the Adelfia sarcophagus demonstrates is that the replicative motifs and decorative embellishments of Roman art, at least on sarcophagi, can themselves be exploited for powerful ideological and thematic ends in an object sophisticated enough to make a visual argument. More frequent than the depiction of sarcophagi

<sup>71</sup> For more on the image of Nebuchadnezzar, see Elsner 2011, 380–382 and Elsner 2014b, 344–347.

<sup>72</sup> See Elsner 2012, 184.



Fig. 13.12b: Main face of the same sarcophagus with strigillated kantharos and fluted pilaster.



**Fig. 13.13:** Marble frieze sarcophagus with central tondo and Biblical narratives from the Old and New Testaments, known as the Adelfia sarcophagus, second quarter of the fourth century AD. From Sicily, now in the Museo Archeologico Regionale, Syracuse (inv. 864).





**Fig. 13.14:** Detail of the Adelfia sarcophagus, from the left side of the lower register. The scene shows Nebuchadnezzar ordering the Hebrews to worship his idol.



**Fig. 13.15:** Detail of the Adelfia sarcophagus, showing the right side of the lid and upper tier of the main face. The lid shows the Magi and the Nativity, the upper tier shows the sacrifice of Isaac, Christ healing the blind man, the miracle of the loaves, Jesus raising the son of the widow of Nain from a strigillated sarcophagus.

on sarcophagi is the use of sarcophagus-shaped objects, whether for narrative themes such as Noah's Ark,<sup>73</sup> or for Dionysiac themes such as the trampling of grapes by putti in lenos- or square-shaped basins.<sup>74</sup> In the latter case these are frequently decorated with sarcophagus-like ornamentation – notably lions' heads (arranged very like those on lion-headed sarcophagi) and sometimes with tendrils and other kinds of Dionysiac decoration.<sup>75</sup> A wonderful example is the child's sarcophagus once in Castle Howard and now in the British Museum, dating to c. AD 260–280 (Figs. 13.16a–d).<sup>76</sup> A lenos carved on all four sides, this has lions' heads with rings in them on both long sides. Mixed human and animal figures – Silenus, centaurs – appear on the curves between the two sets of lions' heads (Figs. 13.16c and 13.16d), while between the lions' heads on the two long sides are two groups with human-like figures: Dionysus leaning on an acolyte with a maenad playing the tambourine and a panther on one side (Fig. 13.16a), and three putti trampling grapes on the other (Fig. 13.16b). All the male figures are nude. The grapes are trampled in a lenos-shaped wine-press, that looks like a sarcophagus and has lions' heads carved on it in the same position as those on both sides of this sarcophagus and indeed of so many lion-headed caskets. Now the kinds of meanings one might read into this – for instance, the transformation of matter within a sarcophagus-shaped casket to create something divine and ecstatic, as grapes can be turned into wine – are numerous. They are not predetermined or forced, but naturally arise as potential interpretations for viewers on the basis of all the replicative uses of motifs and their juxtaposition in *mise en abyme*.

## Conclusions

I have been attempting to argue that the replicative logic that operated throughout Roman art in the deployment of the relatively limited number of types and motifs across rather formulaic and themselves replicated surface shapes – in this case, the restricted longitudinal and 'landscape'-format surface of Roman sarcophagi – offers an alternative model for understanding decoration in relation to meaning from that

<sup>73</sup> See Elsner 2012, 184–185 and Studer-Karlen 2012, 174–178. Examples include Bovini and Brandenburg 1967, nos. 23, 35, 41, 46, 121, 133, 143, 145, 155, 364, 834, 836, 959, 987.

<sup>74</sup> See Bielefeld 1997: undecorated basins: nos. 16, 20[?], 29, 48, 50[?], 56, 57, 65, 72, 75, 79, 80, 86, 91, 113, 116, 118, 123, 134, 142 (left end), 151, 155, 159, 179, 183, 193[?], 194, 202[?], 213, 217, 218; minimally decorated basins: nos. 37, 146, 162, 194, 221, 222; decorated with scrolls, which may perhaps suggest Dionysiac subject matter: nos. 4, 77, 129, 139, 142, 158; decorated with lions' heads, like the lions' sarcophagi: nos. 39, 40, 45, 47, 74, 96, 104[?], 108, 112, 125, 131, 140, 150, 154, 178, 185, 192, 196, 208, 211, 214, 227, 228; decorated with lions' heads and scrolls: nos. 46, 49, 53, 141 and 174, or decorated with lions' heads and a putto in between: no. 117. For some discussion, see Elsner 2012, 182–184.

<sup>75</sup> See the examples above at n. 74 and Matz 1968, nos. 37, 39, 40.

<sup>76</sup> See Oehler 2005; Kranz 1999, no. 21; Bielefeld 1997, no. 45 and Stroszeck 1998, no. 11.





**Fig. 13.16a:** Child's sarcophagus in lenos form with Dionysiac subject matter and lions' heads, c. AD 260–280. Probably from Rome and now in the British Museum (inv. 1996,0301.1). Front of the sarcophagus with Dionysus and his entourage between lions' heads.



**Fig. 13.16b:** Back of the same sarcophagus with lions' heads and between them a scene of putti pressing grapes in a lenos-shaped tub with lions' heads.



**Fig. 13.16c:** Left end of the same sarcophagus with centaur and procession.



**Fig. 13.16d:** Right end of the same sarcophagus – with centaur, satyr and dancing maenad.

normal in the history of art, at any rate since the work of Erwin Panofsky.<sup>77</sup> Panofsky's famous iconological model for the study of art history divided the field into three levels – forms and styles, subject matter and iconography, and ultimately meaning and symbolic values.<sup>78</sup> I have been arguing that the deployment of formal decorative motifs (effectively Panofsky's first level of iconology) created the subject matter and iconographies from which – at the level of the viewer's reception, in relation to the larger range of the ways in which such types and motifs were normally seen – meaning was generated at the point of the spectator's contact. In the case of sarcophagi, the principal control on the range and diversity of meaning was the fact of death and the consolatory purpose of these monuments, with their very specific function of actually containing the deceased. What this means is that, at the most fundamental starting point for the analysis of Roman art, we cannot artificially separate Panofsky's three levels, as he did, but that – at any rate in the case of Roman art – decorative formalism, subject matter and iconography, and the realm of meaning are entirely united, each playing upon and generated by the others. We may not have the means always to identify the full range of literary and cultural referents with which a given item of iconography might have been replete in antiquity, as we may more easily do in later periods, when the evidential base is richer and the array of relevant texts more numerous; but what we can do with Roman art is to identify the ways in which forms and types, motifs and repeated models generate the visual artefact.

It is worth adding here that, on the formal level, as I have been arguing, there is strikingly little difference between 'pagan' sarcophagi and the corpus of Christian examples – their funerary functions, decorative tropes, replicative typologies and willingness to play the game of *mise en abyme* were strikingly close, interconnected and parallel, often using the same artists and workshops, we may assume. However, at the point of the viewer's contact and construction of meaning, there *were* significant differences. In part, these related to a different understanding of the dead body inside the coffin (as one that was capable of salvation and indeed resurrection at the ending of days, in the Christian model). In part, these differences related to the fact that while Christian narrative 'mythology' may seem to have been deployed in very similar ways to pagan mythological narratives – not only in the frieze and columnar figured sarcophagi but also in the five-panel strigillated versions, and in both cases often combined with portrait medallions of the deceased – by contrast, in the Christian context such narrative 'mythology' was grounded in written-down and canonical Scripture rather than frequently changing and often partly oral myth, and tied to increasingly authoritative (not to say potentially authoritarian) models of exegesis,

<sup>77</sup> The key works are Panofsky 2012 (first published in 1932); Panofsky 1939, 3–17; and Panofsky 1955, 26–54.

<sup>78</sup> For a sustained discussion of Panofskian art historical method in relation to classical art, see Lorenz 2016, esp. 17–100.

interpretation and reading promulgated with extraordinary urgency by the fathers of the church in the fourth century.<sup>79</sup>

The regularity (if not vast frequency) of what I have identified as *mise en abyme* in sarcophagi was one way of calling attention to, and offering pause to think about, the nature of a relatively limited system of replicative options, types and motifs. The repetition of these types and motifs could in fact give rise to a vast quantity of quite individualised, and sometimes highly original, works of art. Such *mise en abyme* within the corpus put in focus the frequent, indeed ubiquitous, way in which no one motif or figure or iconographic formulation of several figures was in fact unique – but rather all played with, commented on, or reflected back on the range of others in the corpus, notably the particular examples (possibly numerous) which the artist or the viewer had seen and remembered. There was clearly a broad range of collective cultural meanings that such objects and their representations had even within the limited scope of *mise en abyme* – that is their formally replicated reflections on other objects in the corpus or visual system. But meanings were always also individualised because viewers' experiences of the range of other objects, like the given sarcophagus one might be looking at, were so different. This was true even in a relatively discrete cultural context such as the city of Rome in, say, the Severan period, let alone across the entire Roman Empire over the three centuries (early second to early fifth centuries AD) when the vast quantity of our surviving sarcophagi were produced.

What these objects show is a remarkable diversity of differentiation on the level of the object within strikingly restricted formal and typological constraints (the size, shape and decorative range of sarcophagi). But they also imply, in parallel, a wide range of potential interpretative responses at the subjective level of the viewer's interrogation of the objects within the limited formal constraints and the fundamental thematic focus on death, mourning and consolation. It is this dialogue of object-formalism and subjective-response that is at the heart of understanding the 'ornamental' – as indeed the 'figurative' – in the Roman world.

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<sup>79</sup> See Huskinson 2015, 207–237, for developments of Christian strigillated sarcophagi in the fourth century AD.

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Susanne Muth

## **Aus der Perspektive der römischen Bodenmosaiken: Ornamentalisierte Figuren oder figuralisierte Ornamente?\***

### **Ein geordneter Fischschwarm als Auftakt: Die Ornamentalisierung der Figur**

Es ist ein Bodenmosaik von eher bescheidener, mittelmäßiger Qualität (Abb. 14.1), das uns zum Auftakt als Fallbeispiel dienen soll. In einem wohlhabenden Stadthaus, dem sogenannten Haus des Orpheus, in der römisch-kaiserzeitlichen Provinzstadt Volubilis (Marokko) schmückt es einen kleineren Gelageraum.<sup>1</sup> Der Boden ist, wie das bei Gelageräumen üblich ist, aufgeteilt in verschiedene Felder, denen unterschiedliche Funktion innerhalb des Raumes zukommen und die einen entsprechend unterschiedlichen Mosaikdekor zeigen: Der Bereich, in dem die Klinen an den drei Seiten im Raum standen, zeigt einen simplen geometrischen Dekor, bestehend aus einem Rapportmuster von aneinandergereihten Quadratfeldern bzw. versetzt ineinander greifenden Pelten. Die längsrechteckige Fläche dazwischen, die bei der Nutzung als Gelageraum frei blieb und von den Besuchern auf den Klinen gesehen werden konnte, zeigt hingegen eine reichere Ausschmückung. Die Fläche wird von mehreren, breiteren Rahmenbändern gefasst, als Zeichen ihrer funktional gehobenen Bedeutung. In ihrer Mitte befindet sich ein durch weitere Rahmenbändern hervorgehobe-

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\* Nikolaus Dietrich und Michael Squire danke ich herzlich für die Einladung zu dem anregenden Kolloquium: Die Beschäftigung mit Figur und Ornament auf dem römischen Mosaiken war mir eine spannende und gewinnvolle Herausforderung, der ich mich mit Freuden gestellt habe. Die folgenden Ausführungen verstehen sich freilich nur als eine erste Orientierung – das Thema bedarf dringend einer systematischeren Aufarbeitung. Den Teilnehmern des Kolloquiums danke ich für jede weiterführende Diskussion, die meine Fragestellung nochmals schärfen ließ. Darüber hinaus habe ich vor allem die Ausführungen von Nicola Barham, Verity Platt und Arne Reinhardt zur römischen Archäologie als großen Gewinn und Bestärkung erfahren.

Dem Exzellenzcluster ‚Bild Wissen Gestaltung‘ sei schließlich für die Unterstützung eines Forschungsprojektes zur digitalen Dokumentation und Rekonstruktion der spätantiken Villa von Piazza Armerina gedankt. Die Erstellung der fotogrammetrischen Daten sowie die Rekonstruktion der Villa mit ihrer Innenraumdekoration verdanke ich der sorgfältigen Arbeit von Jessica Bartz, Dirk Mariaschk und Simone Mulattieri. Die hier abgebildeten Aufsichten auf die Mosaiken von Piazza Armerina entstammen diesem Projekt.

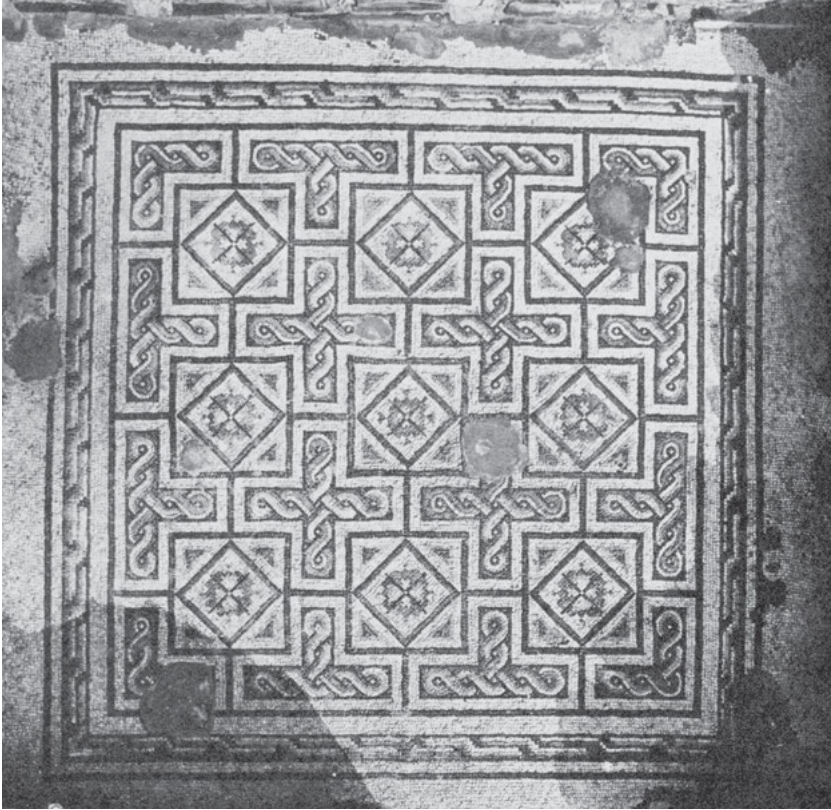
<sup>1</sup> Befund: Volubilis, Maison d'Orphée, Triclinium Nr. 13, 3. Jh.: Thouvenot 1949, 50; Risse 2001, 60–61, Abb. 80.



**Abb 14.1:** Bodenmosaik mit Delphin-Darstellung im Triclinium des Hauses des Orpheus, Volubilis (Marokko), 3. Jh. n. Chr.

nes Bildfeld, welches oben und unten von je einem schmalen Feld mit einem leicht komplexeren Kreuzblütenrapport flankiert wird. Im Unterschied zu der umgebenden Mosaikfläche mit ihren ornamental-geometrischen Rapportmustern zeigt das Mittelbild eine figürliche Darstellung. Neun Delphine schwimmen durch die Wogen des Meeres. Das tun sie allerdings in Form eines auffallend geordneten Schwarmes: In drei Reihen zu je drei Delphinen ziehen sie ihre Bahnen, mit immer wieder alternierender Ausrichtung, mal nach rechts, mal nach links schwimmend, mit der Fischnase nach oben oder nach unten. Was theoretisch in einer ungeordneten und unstrukturierten Anordnung münden könnte, scheint hier streng geregelt: Die vier Delphine in den Ecken sind antithetisch zu ihrem jeweiligen Ecknachbarn positioniert, jeweils mit der Nase zur Bildecke nach außen orientiert; der jeweils mittlere Delphin wendet sich hingegen in umgekehrte Richtung, mit der Nase zur Bildmitte. Soweit dies mit dem Motiv von neun Delphinen möglich ist, verteilen sich die Fische einem geometrisch-ornamentalen Muster gleich (Abb. 14.2) auf dem Boden und tragen somit das Konzept der umgebenden geometrischen Rapportmuster fort:<sup>2</sup> Die Figuren mutieren – dank ihrer spezifischen Anordnung – zum Ornament.

<sup>2</sup> Vergleichsbeispiel: Thuburbo Maius, Maison aux Communs, Raum XVII, 1. Hälfte des 3. Jh.; Ben Abed 1987, 111, Nr. 317A, Taf. XLVI und LXVI.



**Abb. 14.2:** Bodenmosaik mit geometrischem Dekor in der Maison aux Communs, Thuburbo Maius (Tunesien), 1. Hälfte des 3. Jh. n. Chr.

Entsprechend ist es auch diese auffallende Ornamentalisierung des figürlichen Motivs, die unsere Aufmerksamkeit auf dieses Mosaik lenkt. Denn das Bildmotiv bzw. das Bildthema ist an sich weder aufsehenerregend noch einfallsreich. Es zählt eher zum Standardrepertoire römisch-kaiserzeitlicher Bodenmosaiken. Schon allein im marokkanischen Volubilis hat sich nicht weit entfernt in einem anderen prächtigen Stadthaus, dem Haus der Venus, ein ähnliches Bodenmosaik erhalten, das tendenziell in derselben Zeit entstanden und höchst wahrscheinlich von derselben Mosaikwerkstatt verlegt worden sein wird (Abb. 14.3):<sup>3</sup> Auch hier tummeln sich diesmal wohl elf Delphine in den Wellen des Meeres. Im Unterschied zu dem streng geordneten Schwarm im Haus des Orpheus ziehen die Fische jedoch auffallend chaotisch durch die Wogen: Weder in ihrer Ausrichtung nach oben oder unten,

<sup>3</sup> Befund: Volubilis, Maison à la mosaïque de Vénus, Raum 13, früheres 3. Jh.: Thouvenot 1958, Maison 56, Taf. XVI.2.



**Abb. 14.3:** Bodenmosaik mit Delphin-Darstellung im Haus der Venus, Volubilis (Marokko), früheres 3. Jh. n. Chr.

noch nach rechts oder links lassen sich Strukturen erkennen, die auf ein klar konzipiertes System der Figuren-Anordnung schließen lassen. Eindeutig wird hier auf die ungeordnete Verteilung der Fische gesetzt, wie sie dem Bildthema inhaltlich auch angemessener erscheint: Welche Delphine schwimmen schon als ornamentalisierter Schwarm durch das Meer? Das Mosaik im Haus der Venus unterstreicht somit nochmals mehr die bewusste und auffallende Entscheidung zur Ornamentalisierung der Figuren im Haus des Orpheus.

Aus der bisherigen, traditionellen Perspektive der Mosaikforschung muss unser Delphin-Mosaik als ein Grenzgänger wirken. Gewöhnlich werden die römischen Mosaiken – analog zur Forschungssituation in anderen Gattungen der antiken Kulturen – in zwei Gruppen aufgeteilt: Auf der einen Seite stehen die figürlich dekorierten Mosaikbilder, die vor allem aufgrund ihrer Bildthemen und den darin formulierten Vorstellungswelten interessieren, – und auf der anderen Seite die ornamental dekorierten Bodenmosaiken, die die große Mehrzahl der überlieferten Mosaiken ausmachen und vor allem gemäß den Fragen der formalen und stilistischen Einordnung (Zeitstil, Werkstattzugehörigkeit etc.) diskutiert werden.<sup>4</sup> Diese polarisierende Trennung zwischen ‚Figur‘ und ‚Ornament‘ als klassifizierendes Kriterium ist freilich weniger aus den Gegebenheiten der Mosaikbefunde entwickelt; vielmehr wird hier ein Habitus rezipiert, der in anderen Bereichen der kunsthistorisch geprägten Archäologie angewandt wurde und sich dort scheinbar bewährte. Eine eigene und weiterreichende Reflexion auf die Verwendung der Terminologie und die polarisierende Trennung der damit gemeinten Phänomene ist innerhalb der Mosaikforschung nicht erfolgt. Entsprechend einfach konzipiert wird die Polarisierung dann auch praktiziert: in Form einer Trennung zwischen figürlicher Darstellung und nicht-figürlicher Dekoration, zwischen bedeutungsvollem Bild und bedeutungsarmem Mosaikschmuck, zwischen dem Kunstvollen und dem weniger Kunstvollen, dem Wichtigen und dem Nebensäch-

<sup>4</sup> Überblick über das Gesamtrepertoire der Mosaikdekoration, aufgeteilt in geometrischen, floral-vegetabilen und figürlichen Dekor: Dunbabin 1999, 291–300. Die Untersuchungen geometrischer Mosaikdekoration und figürlicher Mosaikbilder verteilen sich oftmals nach unterschiedlichen Fragestellungen getrennt, siehe z. B. Dunbabin 1978; Balmelle u. a. 1985; Schmelzeisen 1992; Balmelle u. a. 2002; Andrae 2003.

lichen, kurzum: zwischen dem figürlichen Mosaikbild und der ornamentalen Bodendekoration.

Natürlich gibt es im Bestand der römischen Mosaiken einzelne Pavimente, die eine solche Trennung zwischen figürlichem Mosaikbild und ornamentalem Mosaikdekor zunächst nahelegen. Vor allem die frühen römischen Mosaiken mit ihren separat eingefügten polychromen Emblemata innerhalb eines einfachen, bichrom angelegten Rapportdekors mögen eine derartige polarisierende Sicht als konstitutiv erscheinen lassen.<sup>5</sup> Betrachten wir jedoch die weitere Geschichte der römischen Mosaikkunst, so erweisen sich diese früheren Pavimente eher als eine Sonderform, die noch spürbar unter dem Einfluss der hellenistischen Mosaikkunst stehen. Die Mehrzahl der römischen Mosaiken aus den folgenden Epochen der Kaiserzeit und Spätantike lassen demgegenüber aber erkennen, dass eine derartige simplifizierende Trennung zwischen den beiden Größen ‚figürlichem Mosaikbild‘ und ‚ornamentalem Nebendekor‘ der Komplexität der römischen Bodenmosaiken nicht gerecht wird. Immer wieder zeigt sich bei diesen Pavimenten ein lebendiges Durchdringen von figürlichen Darstellungen und nichtfigürlichem Dekor, ein Dialog zwischen Figur und Ornament, mit bezeichnenden Prozessen der Transformation. Unser Delphinmosaik in Volubilis erweist sich dabei, betrachten wir es in diesem Kontext, als durchaus symptomatisch – und insofern auch als repräsentativ.

Es erscheint folglich ratsam, sich der Frage nach Figur und Ornament auf den römischen Mosaiken nochmals neu anzunähern.<sup>6</sup> Während unter der klassifizierenden Perspektive der traditionellen Mosaikforschung vor allem die Trennung der beiden Größen interessierte, soll unser Blick nun vor allem auf ihr Zusammenspiel und ihren wechselseitigen Dialog gelenkt werden. Dies gelingt, indem wir im Folgenden weniger die formal-klassifizierenden Kriterien der neuzeitlichen, kunsthistorisch determinierten Mosaikforschung, als vielmehr die funktionalen Kriterien der antiken Bodenmosaiken in den Vordergrund stellen – und damit versuchen, die Mosaiken stärker aus der Perspektive ihrer antiken Hersteller, Auftraggeber und Betrachter zu verstehen. Wenn wir dies tun, verschwimmen die Grenzen zwischen Figuren und Ornamenten als zwei gegensätzliche Pole schnell – und noch mehr: wird das wechselseitige Durchdringen der beiden Größen evident: die Ornamentalisierung der Figuren bzw. die Figuralisierung der Ornamente als ein bezeichnendes Phänomen in der römischen Mosaikkunst.

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<sup>5</sup> Zu den frühen römischen Mosaiken siehe etwa Ling 1998, 34–41; Dunbabin 1999, 38–59. Das Schema findet auch in der Folgezeit zwar weitere Tradierung, verliert aber seine Dominanz, da das Spektrum an Mosaikkompositionen sich massiv weitet.

<sup>6</sup> Anregend in diesem Sinn auch die Diskussion bei Swift 2009.

## ***Decor* und Raumdefinition: Das Funktionieren der römischen Mosaikböden**

Um das Zusammenspiel von Figur und Ornament auf den römischen Mosaiken besser zu verstehen, müssen wir uns kurz mit den grundsätzlichen Strukturen im Funktionieren der Bodenmosaiken vertraut machen.<sup>7</sup> Die formale Ausgestaltung der Mosaiken soll dabei vor allem in Hinblick auf ihr Wirken im räumlichen Kontext diskutiert werden. Dabei erweisen sich zwei Aspekte als besonders zentral – und verdeutlichen zugleich eine erste und grundlegende Veränderung unserer Perspektive auf die Mosaiken: (1) Weniger ist nun nach dem einzelnen Mosaik für sich zu fragen, als vielmehr nach seiner Bedeutung im Dialog der Mosaikböden innerhalb des gesamten Verbundes der benachbarten Räume, welche der Betrachter beim sukzessiven Durchschreiten der Räume wahrnimmt. Und daraus folgt (2): An Stelle einer statischen Rezeption, wie sie traditionell zu rekonstruieren versucht wird, ist vor allem nach einer dynamischen Rezeption zu fragen, die dem Betrachter in seiner Bewegung, beim Durchschreiten der Räume und somit seiner sukzessiven und vergleichenden Wahrnehmung der Bodenmosaiken im Raumdialog gerechter wird.

Betrachten wir die Bodenmosaiken in ihrem räumlichen Kontext, so wird ihre genuine Funktion unmittelbar klar. Die zentrale Aufgabe der Innenraumdekoration besteht darin, den Raum als Lebensraum zu definieren, den sie schmückt. Bezogen auf die römische Kultur definiert sich der Raum als Lebensraum in verschiedenen Dimensionen: als Handlungsraum, als Diskursraum sowie als sozialhierarchischer Raum.<sup>8</sup> Entsprechend kann die Innenraumdekoration unterschiedlich eingesetzt werden: Sie kann auf die konkrete Funktion des Raumes und die dort zentral sich vollziehenden Handlungen (Empfang, Gelage, etc.) verweisen, indem sie zum Beispiel im Bildschmuck das Handeln im Raum wiederholt und damit die Wahrnehmung des Betrachters auf diese Situation fokussiert. Losgelöst von der konkreten Handlung im Raum kann die Mosaikdekoration aber auch eine bestimmte diskursive Stimmung erwirken und damit ein ideelles Ambiente schaffen, das zum Handeln im Raum passt und die Betrachter unterschwellig umfängt und in ihrem Denken und Fühlen beeinflusst. Schließlich kann die Dekoration aber auch durch eine entsprechende Prachtsteigerung oder -reduktion die Position des Raumes innerhalb der sozialen Raumhierarchie des Baukomplexes anzeigen und dem Betrachter die sozialhierarchische Bedeutung seines Handelns und Kommunizierens im Raum vermitteln. Die verschiedenen Aspekte der Raumdefinition schließen sich dabei keines-

<sup>7</sup> Ausführlich zur Diskussion der raumdefinierenden Funktion der römischen Mosaiken und den im Folgenden angesprochenen Perspektiven einer kontext- und medienspezifischen Analyse: Muth 1998, 54–71; Dunbabin 1999, 304–316; Swift 2009, 27–104; Muth 2015, bes. 407–419.

<sup>8</sup> Ausführlicher: Muth 1998, 60–71; Muth 2015, 408–412.

wegs aus, sondern können in verschiedenen Gewichtungen kombiniert und wechselseitig wirken.

Die dekorative Ausstattung folgt jeweils der spezifischen Bedeutung des zu schmückenden Raumes und macht ihn in angemessener Weise erlebbar und erfahrbar. Grundlegend für dieses raumdefinierende Funktionieren der Innenraumausstattung ist hierbei die Forderung nach *decor*, womit die inhaltliche Angemessenheit des Raumschmuckes gemeint ist.<sup>9</sup> In seinen Ausführungen zur architektonischen Gestaltung öffentlicher und privater Bauten betont Vitruv die Idee des *decor* als Grundkonstante der Baukunst.<sup>10</sup> *Decor* definiert sich dabei in der inhaltlichen Angemessenheit des Auszugestaltenden bzw. des zu Schmückenden. Die Kriterien, über die sich eine inhaltliche Angemessenheit ergibt, können dabei unterschiedliche sein und sich an der funktionalen, der ideellen oder der sozialen Dimension der Raumdefinition orientieren. Wesentlich aber ist immer die Ausschmückung nach den Regeln der Angemessenheit („*ornatus ... ad decoris rationes*“).<sup>11</sup> Daraus folgt konsequenterweise, dass alle Formen des *ornare*, alle Ausformungen des *decor* derselben Funktion des angemessenen Ausschmückens dienen, unabhängig von der konkreten formalen Umsetzung: Figur und Ornament gehören aus der Perspektive des *decor* dem gleichen Spektrum des *ornare* an, haben die gleiche Funktion und sind somit nicht als konträre Pole, sondern als Varianten im Rahmen eines angemessenen Schmückens zu verstehen.<sup>12</sup>

## Ornament und Figur im Kontext der Raumdefinition: Die Zwangsläufigkeit eines wechselseitigen Dialogs

Für unsere Frage nach der Verwendung von Figur und Ornament auf den römischen Mosaiken erweist sich der Aspekt des raumdefinierenden Funktionierens als wichtig. Denn er lässt sowohl das Nebeneinander, als auch und noch mehr den wechselseitigen Dialog zwischen Figur und Ornament besser verstehen. Betrachten wir daher ausgehend von den verschiedenen Optionen der Raumdefinition das Zusammenspiel von Ornament und Figur. Dabei werden sowohl die sozialhierarchische als auch die

<sup>9</sup> Hierzu ausführlicher: Muth 1998, 54–59.

<sup>10</sup> Zum *decor*-Begriff bei Vitruv: Vitruv. *De Arch.* 1.2.5–7 (allgemein) und 7.4.4 (speziell zur Innenraumausstattung/Wandmalerei); siehe hierzu ausführlicher Muth 1998, 54 mit Anm. 156–159; ferner: Perry 2005, 31–38 (sowie generell 28–77); Gros 2006; Marvin 2008, 235–238; Swift 2009, 16–17. Römische *decor*-Konzepte werden in diesem Band ausführlich diskutiert bei Platt, Barham und Reinhardt.

<sup>11</sup> Zitat: Vitruv. *De Arch.* 7.4.4.

<sup>12</sup> Siehe in diesem Sinne auch die Beiträge von Nicola Barham und Verity Platt in diesem Band; eine in diesem Sinne anregende und begrüßenswerte Studie liefert ferner Swift 2009, speziell zur Mosaikausstattung ebd. 27–104.



funktionale Raumdefinition im Vordergrund stehen; der Aspekt der ambientalen Raumdefinition spielt jeweils mit hinein, soll aber nicht einzeln diskutiert werden, da sein Gewicht zwangsläufig auf den figürlichen Motiven liegt, so dass von hieraus ein wechselseitiger Dialog zwischen Figur und Ornament weniger primär initiiert wird.

## Die Formulierung der sozialen Raumhierarchie

Um die sozialhierarchische Bedeutung eines Raumes mit Hilfe seiner Mosaikausstattung zu vermitteln, bot sich ein weites Spektrum an unterschiedlichsten Umsetzungen musivischer Dekoration an.<sup>13</sup> An den Enden dieses Spektrum stehen gewissermaßen die konträren Pole: zum einen Bodenmosaiken mit einem einfachen geometrischen Rapportmuster in bichromer Ausführung, als Ausstattung eines Raumes von geringerer sozialhierarchischer Bedeutung (Abb. 14.4),<sup>14</sup> – sowie zum anderen aufwändige Bilderteppiche von polychromer Pracht, als Dekor von Räumen einer gehobenen sozialhierarchischen Bedeutung innerhalb des Raumverbundes (Abb. 14.5).<sup>15</sup>

Zwischen diesen beiden Polen eröffnen sich vielfältige graduelle Abstufungen, die für die sozialhierarchische Raumdefinition notwendig und mit Hilfe der Mosaikausstattung auch leicht formulierbar sind. Die graduelle Steigerung bzw. Reduktion der musivischen Pracht erfolgt dabei zum einen durch die formale und polychrome Konzeption der einzelnen Motive sowie zum anderen durch die gesamte Komposition des Mosaikbodens. Zunahme in der motivischen bzw. kompositionellen Kompliziertheit sowie Steigerung in der Polychromie markieren hierbei die Optionen der Prachtsteigerung.

Ein einfaches und monochrom umgesetztes geometrisches Motiv wie eine Pelta, die im Rahmen eines Rapportmusters beliebig wiederholt wird (Abb. 14.6), kann leicht gesteigert werden durch ein polychrom gesetztes, florales Motiv wie eine Rosette oder eine Blüte, die ebenfalls als Rapportmuster verlegt werden kann (Abb. 14.7) – oder, im Sinne einer nochmaligen Steigerung, durch ein figürliches Motiv, das mit seiner filigraneren, komplizierten und farbigen Ausgestaltung eine deutliche Erhöhung der musivischen Pracht bedeutet. Auf einem spätantiken Mosaik aus Antiochia (Türkei) erscheint beispielsweise ein Rapportmuster, das sich aus analog gestalteten Papagei-Figuren konstituiert (Abb. 14.8): Die Figur des Vogels mutiert hier infolge seiner gleichförmigen Gestaltung, identischen Ausrichtung und strenggeometrischen

<sup>13</sup> Siehe hierzu auch: Muth 1998, 63–67; Dunbabin 1999, 306–310; Swift 2009, 74–104; Muth 2015, 410–412.

<sup>14</sup> Beispiel: Sabratha, Theaterthermen, 2. Jh.

<sup>15</sup> Beispiel: Piazza Armerina, Raum mit dem Arionmosaik, fortgeschrittenes 4. Jh.: Carandini, Ricci und De Vos 1982, 258–268, Abb. 156–165, Taf. XXXVIII.80; Gentili 1999, 1.180–183 und 2.133–142.





**Abb. 14.4:** Geometrischer Mosaikboden mit einfachem Rapportmuster in den Theater-Thermen, Sabratha (Libyen), 2. Jh. n. Chr.

Anordnung zum Ornament.<sup>16</sup> Auf einem spätkaiserzeitlichen Mosaik aus Thysdrus (Tunesien) werden figürliche Motive in nochmals komplizierterer Weise eingesetzt, indem sie sowohl für die die Komposition konstituierenden Trennlinien-Motive, als auch für die stärker schmückend eingesetzten Füllmotive gewählt werden (Abb. 14.9): Gleichförmig gestaltete und antithetisch angeordnete Delphin-Figuren formulieren ein Rapportmuster; in den von den Fischen geformten Flächen erscheinen wiederum gleichförmig angelegte und wechselseitig angeordnete Figuren von Schwänen.<sup>17</sup> Auch hier mutieren die Tierfiguren zu figürlichen Ornamenten. Unser Delphinmosaik aus Volubilis fügt sich in diese Gruppe von Mosaiken mit ornamentalisierten Figur-Motiven. Jeweils bietet das figürliche Ornament somit die Option zur Steigerung der

<sup>16</sup> Befund: Antiochia, 'Mosaic of the Beribboned Parrots', spätes 5. Jh., Paris, Louvre MA 3459: Levi 1971, I, 358 und II, Taf. LXXXVc und CXXXVIIId; Kondoleon 2001, 136–137. Ähnliches Dekormotiv auch beim 'Mosaic of the Dumbarton Oaks Hunt', Levi 1971, 1.358–359 und Taf. LXXXVd.

<sup>17</sup> Befund: Thysdrus, Maison des Dauphins, Raum XXV, 1. Hälfte 3. Jh.: Duliere und Slim 1996, 87–88, Nr. 36b, Taf. XLVII, XLIX und LXXIII.



**Abb. 14.5:** Mosaikgemälde mit Darstellung des marinen Thiasos in einem kleineren Repräsentationsraum in der Villa von Piazza Armerina (Sizilien), fortgeschrittenes 4. Jh. n. Chr.

musivischen Pracht und vermittelt damit eine leicht gehobenere Position des zu schmückenden Raumes innerhalb der sozialen Raumhierarchie.<sup>18</sup>

Die Verwendung von figürlichen Motiven als Füllornament in den geometrischen Grundformen der Mosaikkomposition bildet zweifelsohne die am weitesten verbreitete Option, um mit Hilfe von figürlichen Ornamenten das Paviment und damit den betreffenden Raum zu nobilitieren. An die Stelle nicht-figürlicher Füllmotive, wie sie zunächst die einfachere Dekorationsform bilden (Abb. 14.10),<sup>19</sup> treten dabei figürliche Motive mit unterschiedlichen Graden der Ornamentalisierung: Ganz im Sinne der spezifischen Qualität figürlicher Darstellungen kann zum einen die motivische (und inhaltliche) Komplexität stark betont und unterschiedliche Figuren kombiniert werden – so etwa auf einem Mosaik in der spätantiken Villa von Piazza Armerina in Sizilien (Abb. 14.11), das als zentrales Motiv eine Figurengruppe und in den seitlich rahmenden, kleineren Feldern Büsten und Theatermasken zeigt (sowie in den angeschnittenen Feldern am Rand wiederum floral-ornamentale Motive).<sup>20</sup> Daneben kann aber auch stärker der repetitiv-ornamentale Charakter der Füllmotive akzentuiert werden, indem eine einheitliche inhaltliche Ausrichtung und geringere motivische Variation gewählt wird – wie bei dem Mosaik im anschließenden Nachbarraum der Villa von Piazza Armerina (Abb. 14.12), das in den Bildfeldern der geometrischen Komposition vergleichsweise ähnliche Darstellung verschiedener Früchte zeigt, deren motivische Variation eher zurückhaltend angelegt ist.<sup>21</sup> Dieses Nebeneinander unterschiedlicher Optionen figürlicher Füllornamente lässt sich aus der Notwendigkeit der sozialhierarchischen Raumdefinition erklären: Hier ist die graduelle Abstufung der sozialhierarchischen Positionen – gerade auch beim Vergleich benachbarter Räume – essentiell. Entsprechend erlaubt die analoge graduelle Abstufung der figürlichen Füllmotive (welche an sich ja schon der sozialhierarchischen Nobilitierung des Raumes dienen) im Sinne ihrer mehr oder weniger angestrebten Ornamentalisierung, dass die dadurch reduzierte oder aber gesteigerte musivische Pracht angemessen die sozialhierarchische Bedeutung des jeweiligen Raumes widerspiegelt. Die Ornamen-

**18** Bezeichnend ist die Gegenüberstellung des Mosaikfeldes mit dem anschließenden Feld im rückwärtigen Bereich des Raumes, das als Klinenstellfläche angesprochen werden kann: Dort sind die konstituierenden Figuren des Rapportmusters sowie die Füllmotive aus rein nicht-figürlichen Ornamentmotiven gestaltet, während diese zur anschließenden Raummitte durchweg figuralisiert erscheinen. Siehe Duliére und Slim 1996, 87–88, Nr. 36b und c, Taf. XLVII.

**19** Beispiel: Piazza Armerina, Raum 31 (Zählung Carandini), fortgeschrittenes 4. Jh.: Carandini, Ricci und De Vos 1982, 190–191, Abb. 101, Taf. XXV, 54; Gentili 1999, 1.114–116.

**20** Befund: Piazza Armerina, Raum 39 (Zählung Carandini), fortgeschrittenes 4. Jh.: Carandini, Ricci und De Vos 1982, 243–248, Abb. 143 und 146–147, Taf. XXXVI, 75; Gentili 1999, 1.162–167 und 2.115–123.

**21** Befund: Piazza Armerina, Raum 38 (Zählung Carandini), fortgeschrittenes 4. Jh.: Carandini, Ricci und De Vos 1982, 239 und 242–243, Abb. 138 und 142, Taf. XXXV, 72; Gentili 1999, 1.168–173.





**Abb. 14.6:** Bodenmosaik mit Pelten-Rapport aus dem Haus der Venus, Volubilis (Marokko), früheres 3. Jh. n. Chr.



**Abb. 14.7:** Bodenmosaik mit floralem Girlandenrapport, Thuburbo Maius (Tunesien), 3. Jh. n. Chr.



**Abb. 14.8:** Bodenmosaik mit Papageien-Rapport aus Antiochia, Paris, Louvre MA 3459, spätes 5. Jh. n. Chr.



**Abb. 14.9:** Bodenmosaik mit figuralisiertem Rapportmuster in der Maison des Dauphins, El Djem / Thysdrus (Tunesien), 1. Hälfte 3. Jh. n. Chr.





**Abb. 14.10:** Geometrisches Bodenmosaik in einem Nebenraum am Peristyl der Villa von Piazza Armerina, fortgeschrittenes 4. Jh. n. Chr.

talisierung der Figuren erweist sich somit als Instrument der sozialhierarchischen Raumdefinition – und eröffnet damit die Chance einer weitergehenden nuancierten Differenzierung in der angemessenen Raumdefinition.

In genau demselben Kontext ist auch das folgende Phänomen zu sehen: die Aufspaltung von Bildszenen und ihre Transferierung auf die Ebene der figürlichen Füllornamente. Mosaikbilder mit einer komplexeren Handlungsszene bilden immer ein Kennzeichen für eine besonders gehobene sozialhierarchische Position des Raumes – als Ausdruck einer aufwändigeren Mosaikarbeit und damit Sinnbild



**Abb. 14.11:** Geometrisches Bodenmosaik mit figürlichen Füllmotiven in einem Cubiculum der Villa von Piazza Armerina, fortgeschrittenes 4. Jh. n. Chr.

gehobener musivischer Pracht.<sup>22</sup> In der Mosaikkunst des 1. bis 3. Jh. n. Chr. gelten die Mosaikbilder, die als Pretiosen in geometrische Mosaikkompositionen eingefügt erscheinen, entsprechend als Höhepunkt der räumlichen Mosaikausstattung und werden folglich vor allem in den Räumen höchster sozialhierarchischer Position verlegt (erst ab dem fortgeschrittenen 3. Jh. relativiert sich ihre einzigartige Bedeutung etwas, nachdem nun vermehrt großformatige Mosaikgemälde auftreten, die den Boden des gesamten Raumes okkupieren und damit eine nochmalige Prachtsteigerung gegenüber den eingesetzten Mosaikbildern eröffnen).<sup>23</sup> Neben ihrer nobilitie-

<sup>22</sup> Hierzu ausführlicher Muth 1998, 64–66; Muth 2015, 410–411.

<sup>23</sup> Überblick über den Wandel ab dem fortgeschrittenen 3. Jh.: Muth 2015, 412–419 und 423–424; im Einzelnen siehe auch Muth 1998, 79–97.





**Abb. 14.12:** Geometrisches Bodenmosaik mit figürlichen Füllmotiven in einem weiteren Cubiculum der Villa von Piazza Armerina, fortgeschrittenes 4. Jh. n. Chr.

renden Funktion evozieren die Mosaikbilder mit ihren figürlichen Handlungsszenen freilich auch bestimmte ideelle Vorstellungswelten und dienen somit auch betont der ambientalen (und eventuell auch der funktionalen) Raumdefinition.<sup>24</sup> Darstellungen von *venationes* oder Tierhatzen in der Arena (Abb. 14.13)<sup>25</sup> holen etwa die Vorstellungswelt der Spiele und die damit zusammenhängenden Assoziationen in den mosa-

<sup>24</sup> Zur ambientalen Raumdefinition: Scott 1997; Muth 1998, 68–70; Muth 2015, 409–410.

<sup>25</sup> Beispiel: Mosaik in Tunis, Bardo, aus Thysdrus, Maison de Bacchus, fortgeschrittenes 4. Jh.: Dunbabin 1978, 77 und 258, Nr. El Djem 12a, Taf. XXVII, Abb. 68. Allgemein zu den Mosaikdarstellungen mit Szenen der Gladiatorenspiele und *venationes*: Dunbabin 1978, 65–87 mit Taf. XIX–XXVIII, Abb. 45–73.



ikgeschmückten Raum und beeinflussten damit das ideelle Klima in ihm. Doch nicht für jeden Raum ist es angesichts seines sozialhierarchischen Profils angemessen, ein solches nobilitierendes Mosaikgemälde als Schmuck zu erhalten. Will man dennoch hier nicht auf eine entsprechende ambientale Raumdefinition verzichten, eröffnet sich die Möglichkeit, die szenische Darstellung des Mosaikbildes aufzubrechen und die einzelnen Figuren auf die Ebene der Füllmotive aufzuteilen. So erscheinen etwa auf einem Mosaik in Vallon (Schweiz) die verschiedenen Kampfgruppen auf einzelne Bildfelder verteilt (Abb. 14.14): Ein *venator* flieht oben links vor einem Bären, der ihn verfolgt; darunter lenkt ein Gehilfe die Aufmerksamkeit eines Löwen auf das davon eilende Reh; auf der anderen Seite kämpft ein *venator* gegen einen ihn angreifenden Stier, während unten in der Mitte ein weiterer *venator* zum Speerwurf gegen einen Hirsch ausholt.<sup>26</sup> Ähnlich erscheinen die wilden Tiere, die teils als Kampfgruppen, teils als Fluchtpartner zu denken sind, auch auf einem spätantiken Mosaik aus dem tunesischen Thuburbo Maius (Abb. 14.15): Hier sind die Tiere auf die verkürzte Darstellung als Protome reduziert – ihr szenisches Agieren wird durch die Gegenüberstellung geläufiger Kampfpfpartner, wie etwa Eber und Stier, Löwe und Wildpferd, Raubkatze und Vogelstrauß, suggeriert.<sup>27</sup> Besonders raffiniert erscheint das Aufsprengen von Bildszenen schließlich auf einem Mosaik aus La Chebba (Tunesien) umgesetzt (Abb. 14.16): Während im Zentrum der geometrischen Komposition ein Mosaikbild mit Darstellung einer Fischerszene verlegt ist, erscheinen in den umliegenden Bildfeldern einzelne Figuren, darunter unter anderem Orpheus rechts oben, dem mehrere Tiere in den anschließenden Bildfeldern zugeordnet sind, sowie links unten Arion, der wiederum von vier, ihm zugeordneten Fischfiguren gerahmt wird.<sup>28</sup> Die einzelnen Tierfiguren changieren hier zwischen den üblichen, isoliert zu lesenden Füllmotiven im Kontext der Xenia-Thematik und den zu kombinierenden Bestandteilen einer gesprengten Szenendarstellung.

Die betrachteten Beispiele zeigen deutlich, wie sehr die raumdefinierende Funktion der Bodenmosaiken die motivische Konzeption mit bestimmt – und damit bei der Frage nach dem Dialog zwischen Ornament und Figur zu bedenken ist. Gerade die Bedürfnisse nach einer graduellen Differenzierung in der musivischen Pracht als Spiegel der sozialhierarchischen Relationen der Räume untereinander bedingten, dass figürliche Motive – und als Sonderform sogar szenische Darstellungen – nach den Gesetzmäßigkeiten nicht-figürlicher Ornamente konzipiert und eingesetzt wurden. Die figürlichen Ornamente erscheinen somit hierbei lediglich als

**26** Befund: Mosaik aus der Villa von Vallon, früheres 3. Jh.: Ling 1998, 17, Abb. 8; Agustoni und Wolf 2005.

**27** Befund: Thuburbo Maius, Maison des Protomés, Secteur des Protomés, Raum IX, 4. Jh.: Ben Abed 1987, 17–22, Nr. 263a, Taf. IX–XII und LVI–LVII; Dunbabin 1999, 111, Abb. 112.

**28** Befund: Mosaik in Tunis, Bardo, Inv. Tun. 88, aus La Chebba, 3. Jh.: Dunbabin 1978, 135 und 254, Nr. La Chebba 3.



**Abb. 14.13:** Mosaikbild mit Darstellung des Dionysos und Szenen von Tierkämpfen aus der Maison de Bacchus in Thysdrus, Tunis, Bardo, 4. Jh. n. Chr.



**Abb. 14.14:** Geometrischer Mosaikboden mit figürlichen Füllmotiven (venatio-Szenen) in der Villa von Vallon, früheres 3. Jh. n. Chr.





**Abb. 14.15:** Bodenmosaik mit Girlandenrapport und Tierprotomen als Füllmotive aus der Maison des Protomés in Thuburbo Maius, Tunis, Bardo, Inv. 2757, 4. Jh. n. Chr.



**Abb. 14.16:** Bodenmosaik mit aufgesprengten Bildszenen von Orpheus und Arion als Füllmotive aus La Chebba, Tunis, Bardo, Inv. Tun. 88, 3. Jh. n. Chr.

eine Variante der nicht-figürlichen Ornamente. Und die graduelle Abstufung in der Ornamentalisierung der Figuren unterstreicht ihrerseits, dass Ornament und Figur in diesem Kontext nicht als Gegensätze, sondern in ihrer figürlichen und nicht-figürlichen Ausprägung vielmehr als Varianten desselben Phänomens zu verstehen sind.

## Die Vermittlung der Raumfunktion

Zweifelsohne bildet die funktionale Raumdefinition eine besondere Stärke des figürlichen Mosaikdekors: Darstellungen von Handlungsszenen können in verschiedenen Brechungen die (optionale) Realität im Raum widerspiegeln und mittels ihrer Mosaikdarstellung somit auf die zentrale Nutzung des Raumes verweisen – Szenen der Aufwartung markieren etwa einen Empfangsraum, Szenen des Gelages einen Gelageraum etc.<sup>29</sup> Aber auch die ornamental-geometrische Komposition vermag, wenngleich auf einer anderen Ebene, der funktionalen Raumdefinition zu dienen:<sup>30</sup> Mit Hilfe verschiedener Grundkonzepte der Gesamtkomposition wird dabei zwischen Verweilräumen und Durchgangsräumen unterschieden. Bei Verweilräumen konzentrieren oftmals Zentralkompositionen den Blick in das Innere des Raumes (Abb. 14.17a), während bei Durchgangsräumen Rapportmuster mit ihren endlosen Wiederholung der Dekorationsmotive den Blick sowie damit auch den Gang des Betrachters weiterlenken (Abb. 14.17b).<sup>31</sup>

Die bei der Definition von Durchgangs- und Verweilräumen zugrundeliegenden Kompositionsprinzipien – Zentralkomposition und Rapportmuster – konstituieren sich primär aus dem formalen Repertoire und damit zugleich aus dem Wirkungspotential ornamental-geometrisch konzipierter Mosaikböden. Diese Prinzipien werden jedoch gleichfalls auf figürliche Darstellungen transferiert – und tragen somit ihrerseits zur Ornamentalisierung des figürlichen Mosaikdekors (bzw. zur Figuralisierung des ornamentalen Dekors) bei.

Unser Delphinmosaik in Volubilis (Abb. 14.1) bedient in seiner zentrierten Anordnung des Fischschwarmes deutlich erkennbar das Prinzip der Zentralkomposition – und lenkt entsprechend seiner Funktion als zentraler Mosaikschmuck im Verweilraum den Blick auf die Raummitte (womit auch das Verweilen des Betrachters unterstützt wird). Den dekorativen Strukturen eines Durchgangsraumes ist

<sup>29</sup> Hierzu ausführlicher Muth 1998, 67–68; Dunbabin 1999, 310–313; Muth 2015, 409.

<sup>30</sup> Ausführlicher hierzu: Scott 1997, 61; Muth 1998, 61–63; Muth 2015, 409.

<sup>31</sup> Beispiele: Villa von Tellaro (Sizilien), Repräsentationsraum und Porticus, fortgeschrittenes 4. Jh.: Wilson 2016, 36–38 und 63–74.





a



b

**Abb. 14.17a–b:** Bodenmosaiken in der Villa von Tellaro (Sizilien), Verweilraum (A) und Porticus (B), spätes 4. Jh. n. Chr.



**Abb. 14.18a–b:** Bodenmosaik mit Girlandenrap-  
port und Tierköpfen als Füllmotive in der Porti-  
cus der Villa von Piazza Armerina, fortgeschritte-  
nes 4. Jh. n. Chr.

hingegen etwa das Porticus-Mosaik in der spätantiken Villa von Piazza Armerina<sup>32</sup> unterworfen (Abb. 14.18a–b): Ein Rapportmuster aus Quadratfeldern sowie in diese

**32** Befund: Piazza Armerina, Porticus am rechteckigen Peristyl, fortgeschrittenes 4. Jh.: Carandini, Ricci und De Vos 1982, 134–138, Abb. 49–54, Taf. VII–XIV, 27–30 und 32–35; Gentili 1999, 1.64–83 und 2.16–25; Muth 2005, 232–233. Die Tierköpfe sind nicht an allen Stellen der Porticus in dieser ornamentalisierten Form angelegt: An den Stellen, wo eine raumfunktional bedingte Verzögerung des Durchschreitens angestrebt wird (Aufgang hoch zum Großen Korridor, Eingang zu den größeren Repräsentationsräume am Peristyl) wird die ornamentalisierte Anlage bezeichnenderweise aufgegeben und eine größere Variationsbreite und thematische Durchmischung der kombinierten Tierköpfe gewählt.

eingeschriebenen Kreisgirlanden bestimmt den Boden der Portiken um das rechteckige Peristyl. Als Füllmotive in den Kreisgirlanden erscheinen Köpfe wilder Tiere, die teils frontal ausgerichtet den über sie hinwegschreitenden Betrachter anblicken. Das figürliche Ornament evoziert die Vorstellungswelt der *venationes* sowie der damit zusammenhängenden Jagdexpeditionen – und holt damit ein für die repräsentative Raumfunktion angemessenes ideelles Ambiente in die Porticus. Schon allein das Kompositionsprinzip des Rapportmusters und die strukturelle Gleichförmigkeit der hier eingefügten figürlichen Füllornamente begründen die repetitive Wirkungskraft der Mosaikdekoration und fördern somit die erwünschte Wahrnehmung mit dem Weiterlenken des Blickes sowie der Bewegung des Betrachters. Bemerkenswert ist dabei jedoch, wie weitgehend die Ornamentalisierung der figürlichen Füllmotive hier vorangetrieben wird: In weiten Strecken der Porticus werden die jeweils gewählten Tierpaare nochmals in gespiegelter Anordnung wiederholt, wodurch eine motivische Verzögerung und gleichzeitig zusätzliche Rhythmisierung entsteht: Pferd und Raubkatze, Raubkatze und Pferd, Gazelle und Tiger, Tiger und Gazelle, Stier und Eber, Eber und Stier, usw. Die Anordnung der figürlichen Füllornamente folgt dabei derjenigen nicht-figürlicher Füllornamente, wie dies etwa eine zeitgleiche Porticus einer anderen sizilischen Villa bei Tellaro<sup>33</sup> zeigt (Abb. 14.17b): Auch hier wechseln die Reihen in der Anordnung und Auswahl der nicht-figürlichen Füllornamente. Die betont repetitive Anordnung der Figuren in der Porticus von Piazza Armerina steigert also nochmals ihre ornamenthafte Wirkung und trägt somit zur Rhythmisierung und Dynamisierung von Blick und Bewegung bei, wie dies gemäß den Forderungen des *decor* als angemessener Mosaikschmuck für die Raumfunktion eines Durchgangsraumes gilt.

Das repetitive und rhythmisierende Moment kann aber auch auf die Ebene der figürlichen Bilder transferiert werden. Ein schönes Beispiel hierfür bildet ein spätantikes Mosaik im spanischen Complutum (Abb. 14.19): Im Durchgangsraum, der vom Peristyl der Domus zum Triclinium führt, erscheinen sechs Dienerfiguren aufgereiht, über welche der Betrachter hinwegschreitet auf seinem Weg zum Gelageraum.<sup>34</sup> Die einzelnen Figuren erscheinen in einladender und aufwartender Haltung, mit einem Trinkgefäß in der erhobenen Rechten – als imaginäre Begrüßung des Gastes und Einstimmung auf die Gelagefreuden, die auf ihn im Triclinium warten. Bemerkenswert ist jedoch die Gleichförmigkeit, in der die Dienerfiguren wiedergegeben sind: in Haltung, Tracht, Frisur, selbst in ihrem Schattenwurf mutieren sie zu siamesischen Zwillingen – lediglich die hochgehaltenen Trinkgefäße variieren leicht. Der nachdrückliche Verzicht auf motivische Variation und szenische Interaktion gewährleistet die Rhythmisierung und Dynamisierung als Gestaltungsprinzipien für Durchgangsräume – und transformiert die Dienerfiguren zu ornamentalen Motiven.

<sup>33</sup> Beispiel: Villa von Tellaro, Porticus, fortgeschrittenes 4. Jh.: Wilson 2016, 36–38.

<sup>34</sup> Befund: Complutum, Casa de Baco, spätes 4. bis frühes 5. Jh.: Fernández-Galiano 1984, 1.134 und 160, Abb. 72; 2.135–147, Abb. 9, Taf. LXXI–LXXX; Dunbabin 1999, 154–155, Abb. 158–159.





**Abb. 14.19:** Mosaikbild mit aufwartenden Dienern in der Casa de Baco, Complutum (Spanien), spätes 4. bis frühes 5. Jh. n. Chr.

Eine andere Lösung bei der Übernahme des repetitiven und rhythmisierenden Moments ist im berühmten Großen Korridor der Villa von Piazza Armerina<sup>35</sup> gewählt worden (Abb. 14.20): Den Boden bedeckt ein über 60 Meter langes Mosaikgemälde, das in unzähligen Szenen Jagdexpeditionen sowie den Abtransport wilder Tiere für die *venationes* zeigt. In langen Zügen ziehen die Tiertransporte von beiden Enden des Korridors zur Mitte, bis zum Aufgang hoch in den Repräsentationssaal der Basilica, wo am Mosaikboden der Dominus erscheint, in Vorwegnahme seines realen Auftretens dann in der Basilica selbst. Der Korridor bedient somit ebenfalls die funktionalen Anforderungen des Durchgangsraumes. Um den Blick des Betrachters (und Besuchers) entsprechend weiter zu lenken, ist hier zwar nicht die repetitive Wiedergabe figürlicher Motive gewählt, dafür aber die szenische Darstellung der dynamischen Bewegung selbst: Vom Treppenaufgang hoch in den Korridor bis zum Aufgang hoch in die Basilica ziehen die verschiedenen Figuren (Jagdleute, Diener und gefangene Tiere) in einheitlichen Zügen voran und bahnen imaginär den Weg des realen Betrachters voraus. Der Betrachter wird von der imaginären Bewegung am Boden mitgenommen, sein Blick in deren Richtung weitergelenkt und dadurch sein Schritt rhythmisiert und vorangetrieben. Mit völlig anderen Gestaltungsprinzipien, als sie den nicht-figürlichen, ornamental-geometrischen Mosaikböden zu eigen sind, wird hier somit dennoch eine Wirkungskraft und damit ein Wahrnehmungsprinzip realisiert, wie sie bezeichnend für die geometrischen Mosaikkompositionen in den Durchgangsräumen sind.

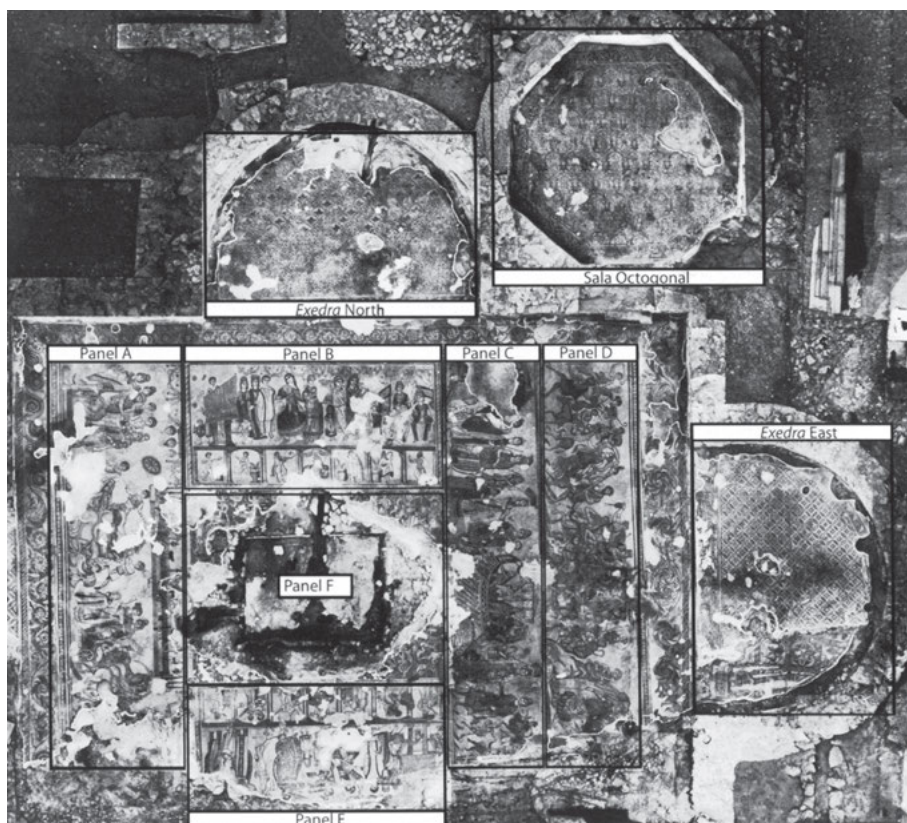
Wie weitgehend die Gestaltungsprinzipien der ornamental-geometrischen Mosaikböden selbst die prächtige Mosaikausstattung großer Repräsentationssäle mit reichem figürlichen Dekor durchziehen können, soll ein letztes Beispiel illustrieren: der große Repräsentationssaal der erst vor kurzem entdeckten spätantiken Villa bei

<sup>35</sup> Befund: Piazza Armerina, großer Korridor, fortgeschrittenes 4. Jh.: Carandini, Ricci und De Vos 1982, 197–230, Abb. 106–131, Taf. XXVII–XXXI, 56–69; Gentili 1999, 1.136–144; 2.76–108; Muth 1999; Muth 2005, 233–235.





**Abb. 14.20:** Mosaikgemälde mit Szenen des Tiertransports im Großen Korridor der Villa von Piazza Armerina, fortgeschrittenes 4. Jh. n. Chr.



**Abb. 14.21:** Mosaikboden des Triclinium (mit wiederholten Mimus-Darstellungen in Feld B und E) in der Villa von Noheda (Spanien), 2. Hälfte des 4. Jh. n. Chr.

Noheda (Spanien).<sup>36</sup> Der Boden zeigt eine anspruchsvolle Komposition (Abb. 14.21): Mehrere großformatige Bildfelder mit dichtem szenischen Figureschmuck bedecken den Raum – am Eingang ein Bildfries mit mehreren Szenen aus dem Mythos von Pelops und Hippodameia, weiter hinten ein Bildfries mit Szenen aus dem Mythos von Paris und Helena, darüber ein Bildfeld mit dem dionysischen Thiasos, in der Mitte des Saales schließlich ein kleines Becken mit marinen Darstellungen im rahmenden Mosaikfeld, sowie dieses an den Seiten des Saales rahmend zwei Bildfriese mit Szenen des Theaterbetriebs. Allein die letzten beiden Bildfriese sollen uns hier interessieren: Im Unterschied zu aller thematischer Vielfalt und einzigartiger Pracht, welche die restlichen Bildfelder des Paviments auszeichnen, erscheint auf den betreffenden seit-

<sup>36</sup> Befund: Villa von Noheda (Cuenca), sog. Triclinium, Mitte/2. Hälfte 4. Jh.: Lledó Sandoval 2010, 137–150 und 153–162, Abb. S. 143–144 und 162; Valero Tévar 2013, bes. 316 und 325–328 mit Abb. 12, 15–16 und 20; Valero Tévar 2015, 257–574 (bes. 355–407) und 513–547.

lich rahmenden Feldern eine nahezu identische Wiedergabe desselben Bildthemas. Lediglich in Details variieren die zum Teil sogar identischen Figuren ihre Haltung und Tracht – auf den ersten Blick bestimmt jedoch das wiederholende Moment die Wahrnehmung der Darstellung. Eine solche, geradezu auffallende Wiederholung von Bild Darstellungen innerhalb desselben, figürlich reich geschmückten Mosaikbodens ist singulär – und somit bewusst konzipiert. Auch hier liegt der Verdacht nahe, dass das Prinzip der Repetition von den geometrischen Mosaikböden übernommen wurde, um funktional sekundäre Flächen innerhalb des Raumes von den primär dominierenden abzusetzen – ähnlich, wenngleich mit ganz anderen Mitteln umgesetzt, wie bei dem Gelageraum im Haus des Orpheus in Volubilis (Abb. 14.1), das uns als Auftaktbeispiel gedient hatte.

## Wechselseitige Transformationen: Ein neuer Zugang zu Figur und Ornament

Wohin hat uns unsere Spurensuche geführt? Betrachten wir die römisch-kaiserzeitlichen und spätantiken Bodenmosaiken aus der Perspektive ihrer raumdefinierenden Funktion und binden sie wieder in den antiken Kontext einer raumübergreifenden Wahrnehmung ein, dann eröffnet sich uns ein anderer Blick auf das Verhältnis von Figur und Ornament. Statt als konträre Positionen – im Sinne von Bedeutungsvoll und Bedeutungsarm, Kunstvoll und weniger Kunstvoll, Wichtig und Nebensächlich – erweisen sich Figur und Ornament vielmehr als Varianten desselben Phänomens. Mit unterschiedlichem Potential dienen sie gleichermaßen der komplexen Raumdefinition, im Sinne der grundsätzlichen Aufgaben der Innenraumdekoration nach den Maßgaben des *decor*, der angemessenen Raumausschmückung. Konsequenterweise werden Figur und Ornament daher auch immer wieder in einen wechselvollen Dialog zueinander gesetzt. Die Folge hiervon sind spannende Prozesse der Transformation: die Ornamentalisierung der Figuren – bzw. da auch hier das Verhältnis ebenso umgekehrt zu denken ist: die Figuralisierung der Ornamente (denn wer vermag zu sagen, welche der beiden Größen als Ausgangspunkt und welche als Maßvorgabe der Transformation genommen wurde?). Erst wenn dieses wechselvolle Zusammenspiel als eigenes und medien-immanentes Gestaltungsprinzip der Mosaikböden erkannt ist, kann es gelingen, die steten Verschränkungen von Figur und Ornament und deren verschiedene Stufen der Transformation genauer zu analysieren – und die Gestaltung der Mosaikböden nicht als das Ergebnis einer Kombination zweier getrennter Formgrößen, sondern als das Ergebnis einer einheitlich gedachten Konzeption des angemessenen Schmückens zu begreifen.

Man mag sich freilich fragen, ob die auffallende und vielfältige Vermischung sowie Transformation von Figur und Ornament auf den römischen Bodenmosaiken eher ein Sonderfall innerhalb der antiken Kunst darstellen – oder ob wir hier ledig-

lich einen besonders illustrativen Befund für grundsätzlichere Gestaltungsprinzipien vor uns haben, dessen Strukturen gleichermaßen für andere Gattungen der antiken Kunstproduktion Gültigkeit haben. Bei der Beantwortung dieser Frage ist zumindest die spezifische Form der Wahrnehmung der Bodenmosaiken zu bedenken: In hohem Masse ist hier eine sukzessive Wahrnehmung aus der Bewegung des Betrachters heraus zu berücksichtigen. Gerade bei den in größeren Räumen verlegten Mosaikböden, die man nur Schritt für Schritt – und zwar wortwörtlich, indem man über die Bodenmosaiken schreitet – sich erschließen und entsprechend rezipieren konnte, kam es zu einer stärker partiellen und folglich sukzessiven Wahrnehmung der Bodendekoration. Diese Sukzessivität in der Rezeption mag ornamentale Gestaltungsprinzipien eher fördern – und daher eventuell auch der Bereitschaft zur Ornamentalisierung der Figuren bzw. der Figuralisierung der Ornamente zuspiesen, als es in anderen Gattungen mit anderen Wahrnehmungsstrukturen der Fall ist.

Aus dieser kontext- und wahrnehmungsbedingten Perspektive betrachtet wird man bei anderen Medien teils größere, teils weniger große Überschneidungen mit den bei den Bodenmosaiken beobachteten Phänomenen vermuten können. Flächendekorationen an Wänden und Decken (Malerei, Stuck, Inkrustationen) mögen – besonders wenn sie entsprechend in komplexeren Raumverbunden überliefert sind – ähnliche Strukturen der Blicklenkung sowie der Vermittlung einer sozialen Raumhierarchie erkennen lassen.<sup>37</sup> Plastisch-dreidimensionale Medien wie Statuen oder Objekte der sog. dekorativen Kunst wie Kandelaber etc., die vor Raumwänden als punktueller Blickfang inszeniert werden, bedingen zumindest eine andere Form der Wahrnehmung und Blicklenkung; gleichsam mag auch hier Repetition bzw. Variation der ornamentalen Ausschmückung den sozialen und funktionalen Raum definieren. Schließlich ist sowohl bei den einzelnen Medien als auch bei ihrem Zusammenspiel die Dynamik des diachronen Wandels zu bedenken: Bei den Bodenmosaiken ist eine spürbare Ausweitung des dekorativen Potentials ab dem späteren 3. Jh. und dann verstärkt in der Spätantike zu beobachten, mit erkennbaren Wechselwirkungen zur jeweiligen Ausgestaltung etwa der Wanddekoration oder der Statuenaufstellung.<sup>38</sup> Der Umgang mit Ornament und Figur im Kontext des *decor* scheint im Laufe der römisch-kaiserzeitlichen und spätantiken Kultur selbst dynamischen Bewegungen unterworfen zu sein. Zumindest im Horizont der Mosaiken scheint er eine Zunahme im wechselseitigen Dialog von Ornament und Figur bedingt zu haben.<sup>39</sup> Gerade diese letzten Überlegungen machen erneut deutlich, wie essentiell eine neue, differenzierte und gattungsumfassende Untersuchung des Phänomens von Ornament und

<sup>37</sup> Zur Wandmalerei siehe etwa Barbet 1985; Lorenz 2015, 255.

<sup>38</sup> Siehe hierzu Muth 2007; Muth 2015, 412–415.

<sup>39</sup> In der Summe nehmen die beobachteten Beispiele ab dem fortgeschrittenen 3. Jh. und dann nochmals forciert im 4. und 5. Jh. zu. Es erscheint lohnenswert, die Geschichte der römischen Mosaiken und ihren Wandel zur Spätantike gerade unter diesem Aspekt nochmals genauer zu untersuchen.

Figur innerhalb der antiken Kunst ist. Die Rolle der römischen Bodenmosaiken, in ihrem stärker medien-spezifischen oder aber gattungsübergreifenden Profil, kann erst in diesem weiteren Kontext genauer bestimmt werden. Nicht zuletzt hieraus ergibt sich nochmals die Wichtigkeit und Dringlichkeit der in diesem Band diskutierten Fragestellungen und der von hieraus hoffentlich weiter angestoßenen kritischen Reflexion auf ein überholtes polarisierendes Konzept im Umgang mit Figur und Ornament.

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